

The Shaping of
TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

Interpretive Articles

Selected and with Commentary by

RICHARD M. ABRAMS *and* LAWRENCE W. LEVINE
University of California, Berkeley



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
Boston

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THIRD PRINTING

*Published simultaneously in Canada
by Little, Brown & Company (Canada) Limited*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

With very few exceptions, the articles in this collection have been taken from diverse scholarly journals and magazines. All the selections are complete within themselves; we have deliberately refrained from excerpting from book-length monographs. Our purpose in bringing them together is to make readily available for students and scholars alike a collection of some of the most important expert commentary on recent American history. We do not claim, of course, that we have reprinted the only significant articles in this area. The great number of journals devoted to American history alone has made it impossible even to attempt to read all the articles that have been published, while limitations of space have made it impossible to use all we should have liked to include. Nevertheless, we do feel confident that the articles we have decided to use will prove to be of considerable value to all students of recent American history.

It was not possible to provide full chronological or thematic coverage. Our criterion has been significance rather than comprehensiveness, and though American foreign policy is not neglected the emphasis is on American political, social, and economic history from the late nineteenth century to the present. A few of the articles delve far back into American history as their authors attempt to explain the genesis of more recent trends and events, so that on the whole this volume treats, in the perspective of both the recent and the more distant past, those changes which have helped to make the United States the richly heterogeneous industrial society it is.

In our introductions we have endeavored to place each article in both historical and historiographical perspective. In suggesting supplementary reading, we have emphasized other important articles rather than books related to the subjects dealt with. Since we have chosen articles that we believe have something important to say rather than those we necessarily agree with, we have presumed to raise questions that remain unanswered, to amplify the authors' arguments, and even to take issue with them whenever we thought it appropriate. Our introductions therefore are an integral part of this collection and are intended to expand its coverage and increase its educational value. We hope that they make it clear to all students that however important any of these articles may be, they are far from the final word on the subject.

We would like to thank the scholars and publishers who have given us permission to reprint the material that makes up the body of this volume.

Richard M. Abrams
Lawrence W. Levine

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The Shaping of
TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

1

THE GOVERNMENT-BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Perhaps the most durable myth in American history claims that the spectacular material achievements of this nation were built upon individualistic self-help — ruggedly competitive economic enterprise unaided and unfettered by government. The argument is too familiar to require restatement here; it remains standard fare in most political campaigns, and is commonplace on the editorial pages of business journals and newspapers. Partisans of 20th-century reform movements have helped perpetuate the myth by contending that the main struggle has been against the “laissez-faire” practices of old-guard administrations, whereas their critics have accepted the description of the 19th century as an “age of laissez faire” and have attributed present ills to our long departure from it.

The myth stands in part upon the truth that American private enterprise in the 19th century was indeed less troubled by government interference than its counterparts nearly anywhere in the world. The contrast between the American experience and that of businessmen elsewhere helped give rise to the laissez-faire-self-help shibboleth. But particular groups throughout American history have employed “laissez faire” as an ideal and an argument whenever state action on some specific matter appears to threaten their special interests.

In the rhetoric of classical liberalism, government and privilege are invariable concomitants. Appropriately, in the first half of the 19th century, the so-called Jacksonians most often used the laissez-faire argument as the protest of “out groups” who accused the state of establishing privileges for favored entrepreneurial interests through the state’s chartering and tariff-setting powers. In the late 19th century, however, the argument became the standard of “in groups” against whom insurgent or defeated interests urged the state to throw its thunderbolt. In the hands of the dominant groups of the nation and with the aid of the prevailing conclusions of both science and theology about the structure of “natural law” (see Mead, pp. 95ff.), laissez faire gained the stature of a metaphysical verity, and became the official ideology of American society.

President Grover Cleveland gave pithy expression to that ideology in 1887 when he declared that “while the people should patriotically and cheerfully support their Government its functions do not include the support of the people.” Yet it has never been easy to ascertain

which state actions constitute "the support of the people" and which demand the people's support. In the language of those who have achieved ascendancy and need no further boost, Andrew Carnegie asserted, in the troubled year of 1886: "If asked what important law I should change, I must perforce say none; the laws are perfect." Carnegie did not hesitate, however, to advocate a federal subsidy for the construction of a canal, so that his steel mills in Pittsburgh might receive raw materials more cheaply. The National Association of Manufacturers in 1895 condemned federal expenditures to provide vaccines to cattlemen while it issued a call for federal subsidies to foster export markets for manufactures abroad; the one it branded "paternalism"; the other it urged as a measure "to promote the general welfare." [For the most thorough exposure of these contradictions, see S. Fine, *Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State . . . 1865-1901* (1956).]

In the twenty-five scholarly works that Robert Lively (now Professor of History at Princeton University) reviews in the article that follows, the view that Americans before 1900 rarely turned to the state for assistance or protection is thoroughly demolished. By the end of the 19th century, according to the studies, "King Laissez Faire" was "not only dead; the hallowed report of his reign had all been a mistake." Throughout the 19th century "the activities of state and local governments were of crucial importance in the stimulation of enterprise in the United States." The works reviewed carefully document "the emergence of a sturdy tradition of public responsibility for economic growth," a responsibility so continuously honored that "it seems expanded in no theoretical respect by its modern uses in the Tennessee Valley Authority or in the exploitation of atomic energy."

The misapprehension about laissez faire in America has been so persistent that at least two of the authors whom Lively reviews set out in their studies to explain the *decline* of the active state by the time of the Civil War — which period lay beyond the scope of their investigations. It is now abundantly clear that government intervention after the War considerably exceeded government action in ante-bellum days. It is astonishing how long it has taken presumably disinterested scholars to discover this fact. In Grover Cleveland's own day, James Bryce devoted an entire chapter of *The American Commonwealth* to destroying the laissez-faire myth: "Though the Americans have no theory of the State and take a narrow view of its functions," Bryce wrote three-quarters of a century ago, "though they conceive themselves to be devoted to *laissez faire* in principle, and to be in practice the most self-reliant of peoples, they have grown no less accustomed than the English to carry the action of government into ever widening fields." The Americans, he noted, "are just as eager for state interference" as the British, "and try their experiments with even more light-hearted promptitude." "No one need be surprised at this," Bryce explained; for Americans "are even more eager . . . to hasten on to the ends they desire, even more impatient with the delays which a reliance on

natural forces involves. . . ." [*The American Commonwealth* (1888), vol. III, 272-273.] Yet the myth lived on, an error (as Lively puts it) "of monumental proportions, a mixture of overlooked data, interested distortion, and persistent preconception."

A number of studies on the American government's role have appeared since the publication of Mr. Lively's review article, most notably C. Goodrich's *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads: 1800-1890* (1960). It is especially interesting that although Goodrich points out the extensive character of government aid, and is highly critical of the chaotic, special-interest character of such intervention, he nevertheless rejects the suggestion that entrepreneurial individualism was entirely a myth. Writing from the perspective of an economist who has headed many projects on the economic development of underdeveloped countries, Goodrich is especially sensitive to the unique conditions of American growth, which included a people generally and genuinely competitive, individualistic, and creative. As he says in his article, "American Developmental Policy" [*Journal of Economic History*, XVI (Dec. 1956)]: "Our record shows that a large amount of this government action was taken by local governments, often of small communities. . . . In our case, moreover, governmental effort has been accompanied and abetted by the voluntary activity of a host of unofficial civic organizations for which I am sure no parallel can be found in the history of other developing countries. Our policy . . . has thus been profoundly affected — for better or worse — by the traditional American characteristics of individualism, of localism, and of the habit of voluntary association."

Two essential points emerge: (1) American economic development has owed a great deal throughout its history to continuous governmental intervention, without which private enterprise could (would) not have performed the "miracles" it is usually credited with; (2) Despite the tendency of some reviews (not Lively's) to regard the recent studies as "destroying the myth of American individualism," they really only prove that entrepreneurial individualism extended into politics, and that American economic ingenuity and initiative was never confined to strictly economic activity. The second point is especially important. The political and economic history of the 20th century can be understood only if it is recognized that businessmen, farmers, and workers alike have, *throughout* American history, used politics as a lever to secure economic advantage, and there has been no clear line between economic and political maneuverings toward this objective. The great extension of *federal* activity in the economy in the 20th century reflects primarily the widening interstate competition among and within these groups. *De facto*, only the rationale and policy objectives have changed.

Those who wish to pursue this idea with attention to the 20th century should consult especially R. H. Wiebe's *Businessmen and Reform* (1961), G. Kolko's *The Triumph of Conservatism* (1963), and S. Fabricant's *The Trend of Government Activity in the United States*

since 1900 (1952). Robert Lively's own "The South and Freight Rates: Political Settlement of an Economic Argument" [*Journal of Southern History*, XIV (Aug. 1948)] presents a specific case in which the interaction of politics and economics is most clearly illustrated.

The American System: A Review Article

ROBERT A. LIVELY

The role of government in the ante-bellum American economy has been boldly redefined in a score of books and articles published during the past decade.¹ Close analysis of state and local sponsorship of enterprise, initiated and supported by the Committee on Research in Economic History,² has suggested a thesis that appears to invite a new view of American capitalism in its formative years. Taken together, the works here reviewed form a consistent report of economic endeavor in an almost unfamiliar land. There, the elected public official replaced the individual enterpriser as the key figure in the release of capitalist energy; the public treasury, rather than private saving, became the major source of venture capital; and community purpose outweighed personal ambition in the selection of large goals for local economies. "Mixed" enterprise was the customary organization for important innovations, and government everywhere undertook the role put on it by the people, that of planner, promoter, investor, and regulator.

No scholar has yet attempted a general description of an America so dependent on its public authorities. The several authors who have conducted the recent surveys of little known state and local functions have carefully qualified their findings, and each has confined himself to a specific area or a selected problem in his restatement of the relation of government to enterprise. The most ambitious and inclusive accounts of positive state endeavors may be found in the articles and monographs of Louis Hartz, and Oscar and Mary Handlin. Concerned primarily with what the people wanted from their governments, rather than with what they got, Hartz and the Handlins were free to let their speculations carry them to extreme views. More limited

Reprinted from the *Business History Review* XXIX (March 1955) 81-96, by permission.

¹ [The bibliographical material referred to will be found at the end of this selection.]

² Arthur H. Cole, "Committee on Research in Economic History. A Description of Its Purposes, Activities, and Organization," *Journal of Economic History*, XIII (1953), 79-82.

but more impelling conclusions are presented in the works of Carter Goodrich and Milton Heath: their restraint lends force to their views of the carefully defined issues they analyze. Harry Pierce, John Cadman, James Neal Primm, Earl Beard, and others avoid bold generalizations, but add essential detail to the Goodrich-Heath story. These authors are united in their belief that the activities of state and local governments were of crucial importance in the stimulation of enterprise in the United States. Their variations on this theme are so numerous that the principal concern to which all return is surprisingly familiar. Their common specific task is the rescue of the internal improvements movement from the political historian, and the inflation of this issue as primary evidence for their new view of America's economic organization. In their report of the struggle of communities and states for control of inland produce or for access to markets, they document the emergence of a sturdy tradition of public responsibility for economic growth. The tradition as they describe it, persistent to the very end of the nineteenth century, was so extensively employed that it seems expanded in no theoretical respect by its modern uses in the Tennessee Valley or in the exploitation of atomic energy.

. . . Recent notice of the age and respectability of this tradition began with attack on what Louis Hartz called the "laissez faire" cliché that "has done much to distort the traditional analysis of our early democratic thought" (Hartz, 2, xi). Historians, according to Hartz and others, have compounded this distortion by concentration on national issues, and by excessive concern with limitations put by the Constitution or by jealous sections on the Federal government. The story obscured, meanwhile, has been that of the broad uses to which the ante-bellum states put the powers reserved to them in a Federal system. In three papers read to the 1943 meeting of the Economic History Association, Oscar Handlin, Hartz, and Milton Heath reported that the states of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Georgia were in no way inhibited by laissez-faire notions. "In the realm of the practical," observed Handlin, "there never was a period in Massachusetts history when this conception was of the slightest consequence. From the very first organization of the Commonwealth in 1780, the state actively and vigorously engaged in all the economic affairs of the area, sometimes as participant, sometimes as regulator" (Handlin, 1, 55). Of Pennsylvania, Hartz later said that, "Far from being limited, the objectives of the state in the economic field were usually so broad that they were beyond its administrative power to achieve" (Hartz, 2, 292). Milton Heath concurred, though with variations, when he concluded that of Georgia "it may be said that during the early decades there developed no definite philosophies defending the exclusive validity of either individual or public action" (Heath, 3, 100).

King Laissez Faire, then, was according to these reports not only dead; the hallowed report of his reign had all been a mistake. The error was one of monumental proportions, a mixture of overlooked data, interested distortion, and persistent preconception. Scholars who tried to set the story right, moreover, found the void before them yawning constantly wider. Authors of the first major books addressed to the issue met with boldness and imagination the problem of guiding readers through a land from which theoretical signposts had been removed. Oscar and Mary Handlin, and Louis Hartz, who published their full-length studies of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania in 1947 and 1948, were engaged by hypotheses that outreached their evidence, but the shock effect of their works was a useful stimulant to fresh and original thought about the role of government in early state history. It now seems evident that the Handlins and Hartz, in their enthusiasm for the demolition of laissez-faire mythology, substituted new theories almost as unsatisfactory as the ones they so adequately undermined. They were victims, in a way, of the assumptions they discovered to be false when employed in description of the ante-bellum period. Instead of eliminating the laissez-faire theme from analysis of public policy, they merely changed its chronology. Each assumed general adherence to the philosophy *after* the mid-century point at which their studies ended; and with this presupposition they gave to their account of earlier alternative policies a tone more appropriate for description of antique curiosities than for revelation of continuing themes in American economic history. They wrote as though state sponsorship of economic development had been an all or nothing proposition, a point of view that obligated them to demonstrate the total collapse and failure of the schemes and visions they had discovered.

In this respect the Handlins' work was the more portentous: they were quick to admit that the "commonwealth" policies (their name for persisting elements of mercantilist theory and practice in Massachusetts) were doomed from the start. According to their theory Massachusetts emerged from the Revolution composed of many diverse interests, but polity in the state was dominated by the "fact that transcending the interests of all its constituents was the interest of society . . ." (Handlin, 3, 30). This "unity behind diversity" was to be expressed by a "government prominent in the direction and management of productive enterprise" (Handlin, 3, 261). Ambition for bold public endeavors, however, was cramped by a narrow public purse and popular fear of debt. The state therefore operated through the grant of privilege or the gift of incorporation to private groups. Rapid extension of these grants weakened the concept of common interest, and led inevitably to the growth of a body of private rights with which the government could not interfere. The state matched its original broad purpose with

growing policy in only one area, that of humanitarian reform — or, as the Handlins would have it, in “police state” functions. Otherwise their analysis of policies from the Revolution to the Civil War reveals a story of shrinking public ambitions, of “transition from the Commonwealth to the police state, from mercantilism to liberalism . . .” (Handlin, 3, 262).

The Hartz analysis revealed that in Pennsylvania there was equally persistent faith in mercantilist theory; there, as in Massachusetts, the Revolution simply meant belief in the “need for utilizing that principle exclusively for colonial ends” (Hartz, 2, 6). Pennsylvania, however, implemented faith with a remarkable array of plans, controls, investments, and public works. Policies of the state affected “virtually every phase of business activity, were the constant preoccupation of politicians and entrepreneurs, and they evoked interest struggles of the first magnitude. Government assumed the job of shaping decisively the contours of economic life” (Hartz, 2, 289). Through its chartering policy it registered influential opinions on the character and shape of banking and transport enterprises, and then on an increasing variety of industrial developments. As investing partner of enterprises, it placed public directors on the boards of over 150 “mixed” corporations by 1844. Further, by the sale of public lands, and by the investment of more than \$100 million in the public works system, the state, in its “entrepreneurial function . . . assumed major proportions” (Hartz, 2, 290). Humane regulatory policy was equally extensive, from the abolition of slavery in 1785 to the limiting of child labor in the 1850’s. The state, in fact, acquired such extensive responsibilities that its bureaucratic machinery broke down; a “stable and expert administrative system . . . did not develop” (Hartz, 2, 293). Administrative failure was compounded by sectional jealousies within the state; the public credit was critically threatened by the hard times of the late thirties and early forties; and in the end the theorists of public enterprise were driven from the field by their erstwhile partners, the private directors of mixed corporations. Confident, mature, and no longer dependent on the public treasury for their existence, the now “private” corporations clothed themselves in individualist theory, and launched with “messianic vigor” a successful assault on the whole theory of state participation in enterprise.

Unhappily for a critic in search of a documented hypothesis, the image of the positive state thus revealed in the Hartz and Handlin monographs is limited by the authors’ intentions to the status of an engaging speculation rather than a demonstrated reality. The authors set out to describe what the people of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania conceived to be the role of their governments, rather than to outline government activity; and with this definition of their work as exercises in intellectual history, they very often rele-

gated principal economic themes to the position of supporting detail. For the Handlins this approach permitted convenient and specific disavowal of any effort to "assess the effects of government action upon economic trends" (Handlin, 3, xii). Selection of the "commonwealth" theme permitted adequate proof for their belief that the state government was for many years expected to show formal interest in every public and private endeavor of material consequence — but from the evidence they present this concern was displayed without cash content or interested administration. Bemused with the curiosity about the Commonwealth pattern, they avoided analysis of substantial public aid to the emerging corporations whose legal form and rights they understand so well. Louis Hartz, on the other hand, was very much concerned with positive state policies, but only insofar as these policies would illustrate the half-century of debate that led on the eve of the Civil War to the emergence of a full-blown *laissez-faire* philosophy. Along the way he documented Pennsylvania's extraordinary excursions into state-sponsored transportation development, but the heart of his study lies not in what the state did, but in the story of how individual enterprisers and public planners alike lost control of both their theories and good works to the private corporations that supplanted them.

The Hartz-Handlin interpretation of the rise and decline of state ambition has not been adopted by students investigating related material. Scholars at work on similar themes have found that a smaller canvas and more thorough development of relevant detail brings them to conclusions quite different from those of the works just summarized. An effort to demonstrate the practice as well as the theory of state enterprise has required them to rely on more conclusive evidence than a summary of popular hopes and complaints; and they have found that achievements, as distinct from vague desires, were the products of somewhat more orthodox capitalist purpose.

The data repeatedly employed in analysis of state endeavors has been sought in study of public aids to railroads. No other public undertakings excited such extensive argument, nor attracted, in the end, so great a share of the public's capital. Careful review of causes and effects in the story of railroad aid became for Milton Heath and Carter Goodrich a means to general analysis of the role of government in ante-bellum economic development. Heath described in his 1937 Ph.D. dissertation the railroad building efforts of communities and states throughout the South. Goodrich, in six recently published articles, surveyed the hopes, methods, and achievements of officials directing government assistance at every level of public administration. Both men, writing as economists and students of planning, sought a contemporary relevance in the familiar story of "internal improvements." In the nineteenth-century American experience they hoped to find lessons that

might prove useful to modern underdeveloped countries that are also faced with problems too great for the skill and capital of their private organizations. In applying the word "planning" to ante-bellum practices, they quite consciously gave the word its modern meaning — that is, the adoption by communities of "deliberate and concerted policies . . . designed to promote economic expansion or prosperity and in which positive action to provide favorable conditions for economic activity is emphasized more strongly than negative regulation or the correction of abuses" (Goodrich, 2, 16; Heath, 2, 1).

The end to which the planners aspired was neither the achievement of an all-embracing "commonwealth," after the Handlin definition, nor yet the creation of a permanent public stake in enterprise, according to the Hartz pattern. Rather, "public railroad promotion took on the character of positive planning for a freer private enterprise" (Heath, 1, 46; Goodrich, 3, 355). In the America they described there was no particular disposition to question the propriety of public enterprise, where private efforts proved inadequate to meet public needs. There was little positive preference, on the other hand, for public works as something inherently superior to private endeavors. States or localities undertook roles for which no other agency was fitted, and then waited for the time when the public might "conveniently exchange its position as proprietor for that of regulator" (Heath, 2, 43). Milton Heath's observations on the normal cycle of municipal investment revealed a chronology and a purpose that were repeated at each level of government operation:

. . . the public function was viewed as an initial, developmental one. After enterprises became established on a profitable basis, city governments tended to transfer their investments to new projects, and so, normally, a transition from public or quasi-public to private ownership and operation took place (Heath 1, 49).

Local and state governments assumed the "role of the primary entrepreneurs" as part of their normal functions (Heath, 1, 51). When public-spirited citizens met to discuss the need for projects of public utility, they turned naturally toward some variety of the public corporation as the agency best fitted for large efforts (Goodrich, 1, 307). The need for capital was the factor that most frequently determined government entry into the field of enterprise; only public authorities could command sufficient credit at a reasonable interest rate for works of the size demanded. Subordinate considerations were usually present, of course: glib promoters reached eagerly for public funds; hopeful administrators sought state investments so profitable that taxes could be reduced; and in a day when works of public utility

were by definition regarded as monopolistic, a people suspicious of power generally were sure to insist that their governments guide these developments with a firm regulatory hand. But underlying every justification for state endeavor was the hope that by public effort businessmen of a locality would prosper, that land values would rise, and that the competitive position of the area would be improved. The whole business community was dependent on state execution of the general investment functions necessary to economic growth; it was by state endeavor that "idle resources could be brought into employment and the social income maximized" (Heath, 1, 47-48).

Discharge of these practical functions required state governments more active, if anything, than those that might have undertaken the theoretical responsibilities discussed by Hart and the Handlins. The Goodrich and Heath hypothesis, moreover, enjoys the advantage of superior documentation by measurable facts — and contains, at the same time, a plausible explanation for most of the impulses described by the earlier reporters. Above all, the Goodrich-Heath theme is consistent with subsequent developments in the nation's economic history. After the states handed over their projects to private direction, the Federal government emerged as the chief sponsor of transcontinental enterprise, and local governments pledged their credit to the completion of the interlacing railroad net. The terms for these later grants of aid were substantially altered by the maturity and strength of the post-Civil War private corporation, but the established role of government was if anything enlarged.

. . . However varied the explanations for public sponsorship of enterprise, the facts supporting these stories can be summarized in one generalization: the movement was virtually unlimited both as to time and place. From Missouri to Maine, from the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century, governments were deeply involved in lending, borrowing, building, and regulating. Beyond this observation summary is difficult. Accurate measurement of the public's stake in enterprise, for instance, cannot be taken from the evidence here reviewed. The statistics employed by the several authors are of an illustrative rather than a conclusive sort. Diligent in their analysis of the total figures involved in public investment, they have not undertaken similar analysis of the private contribution to mixed corporations. They show a tendency to rely on reported book values in their estimates of total construction costs, and they thus ignore both the enormous discounts involved in marketing stock to private groups, and the extensive practice by which "investors" offered overvalued construction services rather than cash for their share of developments.

Milton Heath's estimate of the cost of the Southern railroad net represents an unusual effort to take these latter factors into account. According to the Census of 1860, the cost of the South's 9,211-mile system had been \$245,212,229. Of this approximate cost, the public had supplied 55 per cent through its official agencies. Further refinement of this estimate, however, suggests that private investment was so often in labor and kind that public authorities actually supplied about three-fourths of the cash required (Heath, 2, 253). In contrast, Harry Pierce emphasizes the importance of state and local investment of \$47,150,035.46 in New York's railroads, but he sets total construction costs at \$400,000,000, a figure left uncriticized either as to type or time of investment (Pierce, 25, 5).

The bulk of references to the extent of public endeavors, however, are presented without the foregoing bases of comparison. A review of the statistics of state and local investment suggests how generally the movement was shared, and how great a burden governments undertook, but it affords no decisive measure of the government role in contrast to that of private investors. Even with their use thus qualified, the figures are impressive. Pennsylvania was probably the most active, not so much for her investment of \$6,171,416 in 150-odd mixed corporations, but for her expenditure of \$101,611,234 on the construction and operation of the Main Line canal and railroad system. New Jersey, on the other hand, was one of the few states that stayed almost completely out of the movement (Goodrich, 3, 357; Cadman, *passim*). In New England, Massachusetts, the only notable state investor, put \$8,200,000 in eight railroads by 1860; and she had just begun the celebrated Hoosac Tunnel Project, in which she was to invest \$28,856,396 by the turn of the century (Kirkland, I, 324, 432). To the West, Missouri had pledged \$23,101,000 to improvements by 1860, a sum estimated by James Neal Primm at 25 times the state's average annual income (Primm, 105). These undertakings of the late forties and the fifties have hitherto been obscured by the familiar story of panic and retrenchment in states throughout the Union after 1837-1839.

The most impressive revelation in the detailed analysis of the improvement program is the degree to which local governments maintained and extended the responsibilities relinquished by many states on the eve of the Civil War. The local aid movement, authorized by 2,200 laws in 36 states, appears to have dwarfed better-known state endeavors (Goodrich, 4, 412-23). The bulk of local aid, further, was given after the Civil War; enterprise demanded and received vital support from public treasuries so long as there was a mile of American railroad track to be laid. In Maine, for instance, the legislative delegation of Aroostook County was electing public

members of the Bangor and Aroostook's Board of Directors in the 1890's, and thus defending the County's new \$728,000 stake in the road's future (Kirkland, I, 491).

Harry H. Pierce, in his outstanding study of the railroads of New York, 1826-1875, has taken the only satisfactory measure of the local aid movement. In an account drawn from scattered town records, railroad books and correspondence, legislative records, and court reports, Pierce found that 315 of New York's municipalities pledged \$36,841,390.69 toward the construction of the state's roads. The conclusions he drew from study of hundreds of specific projects are arresting:

. . . the importance of these subsidies lies not in their amount but in their timeliness. In practically every instance the aid was proffered at a critical moment in the company's history. It is significant that, with the exception of the city of Albany, neither the state nor any municipality ever assisted a railroad that was already in operation. Public money in New York always pioneered the way. It took the initial risk. . . . Government aid to railroads not only facilitated the raising of money, but also greatly reduced the cost of financing them. In many cases, particularly in the building of marginal lines, public subsidies made possible the construction of roads that would not otherwise have been built. In an even greater number of instances, it permitted the completion of projects at a much earlier date than would have been possible with private capital alone (Pierce, 25).

Other students agree that local aids were very considerable, but some assert that they were given when public subsidies were of diminishing importance (Goodrich, 4, 435). E. C. Kirkland, for instance, reveals in a few pages the mixed views with which the postwar grants have been described. He concludes that New England communities were "so extravagant and so generous that the pre-war years in comparison were but a diminutive fore-runner." By reference to the total capitalization of the roads, however, he minimizes the effect of the new public investments. Although Connecticut towns subscribed 60 per cent of the new railroad securities issued in the state between 1868 and 1877, the town percentage of total capitalization in 1877 "was only nine." In his general summary of New England efforts, on the other hand, he appears to credit the aids with more decisive effect; no other policy, he reports, "public or private, produced so many useless railroads" (Kirkland, II, 309-16).

Local efforts were extensive throughout the Union. Louis Hartz concluded that in Pennsylvania, state investment was at its height "of minor significance compared with investments by cities and counties" (Hartz, 2, 86). Ante-bellum southern cities and counties contributed \$45,625,512.05 out of total southern aids of \$144,148,684.92 (Heath, 1, 41). James Neal

Primm concluded that most of the stock "sold" in the 1850's by the state-aided railroads of Missouri was sold to the municipalities and counties through which the roads would pass (Primm, 106). The major undertakings of Baltimore are well-known; the city invested about \$20 million in railroad development between 1827 and 1886 (Goodrich & Segal, 5, 2). The indications are that cities and counties to the west were increasingly lavish in their grants as the years passed. Cincinnati exceeded Baltimore in expenditures on her municipally owned road; the city of Milwaukee, with a population of 45,246 in 1860, lent \$1,614,000 in 1858. Earl Beard's recent analysis of local aid in Iowa reports as an "educated guess" a total of \$50 million spent there by the 1890's (Beard, 32). More than adequate figures are at hand, it seems, to support the recent conclusion by Carter Goodrich that the generally employed estimates on the extent of public aid published in 1938 by the Federal Coordinator of Transportation are far too low³ (Goodrich, 4, 430).

. . . Detailed analysis of railroad development has not been duplicated in studies of state promotion in other fields. In the four states for which general policy has been described — Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Missouri — the passage rather than the administration of promotional laws has been offered as evidence of state achievement. Grant of the privilege of incorporation, with attendant alienation of certain public powers, is perhaps the only other major concern subjected to careful definition. There were laws on every conceivable subject, but without an account of enforcement machinery there is no means by which their effect can be judged.

Massachusetts, for instance, used licensing laws to grant monopoly privileges to selected entrepreneurs; the pioneer glass manufacturers of the state were promised years of freedom from competition (Handlin, 3, 81-82). Bounties were given quite freely by several states, particularly to agriculture. Maine paid out \$150,000 in the year 1839 alone to wheat and corn producers, nine states subsidized silk culture (Taylor, 380); and Massachusetts aided fisheries and naval stores production (Handlin, 3, 83-84). Tax exemptions and relief of workers from poll taxes or from militia and jury duty were other means by which industries in certain states were encouraged. Pennsylvania was active for a number of years after the Revolution in fixing prices for certain goods and services (Hartz, 2, 206). Many states encouraged quality production by inspection laws, affecting in particular goods consigned to interstate commerce. Georgia maintained 30 public warehouses for the grading and marketing of tobacco by 1800 (Heath, 3, 85); and Missouri inspected virtually all tobacco exported after she constructed

³ Federal Coordinator of Transportation, *Public Aids to Transportation*, I (Washington, 1938), 18-19.

a \$25,000 tobacco warehouse at St. Louis in 1843 (Primm, 118). Stay laws, relief laws, and public loan offices were familiar phenomena after the Panic of 1819.

The authors cited have skirted warily around one type of major undertaking comparable in scope to the internal improvements effort. Enterprise throughout the union depended heavily on the credit provided by the investment of state capital in banking operations. Recent reappraisals of the operations of the Second Bank of the United States, however, have not been followed by more than casual summaries of the way in which states put their resources behind public or mixed banking systems. A series of articles by Bray Hammond has swept away some of the mythology surrounding these state adventures, but effort to give the movement a proper place in the general story of state enterprise has been limited (Hammond, 1, 2, 3). No one, for instance, has developed the challenging conclusion offered by Guy S. Callender more than 50 years ago, to the effect that the southwestern states, in their large-scale grants of credit to commercial agriculture, maintained responsibilities comparable to the canal and railroad building efforts of the middle states (Callender, 161-62). The amount of money invested has usually been estimated, and banking as a political issue described, but the day-to-day operations and achievements of partially or wholly owned state systems remain a field for research demanding all the support now promised by the Committee on Research in Economic History.

Opinions expressed casually about forces apart from central themes developed in the subject literature seem in some cases more important than specific illustrations of state enterprise. The role of private capital, suggested in scarcely more than parenthetical references, is quite anomalous. The authors take repeated note of the "unwillingness of private investors to risk their money in railroad securities . . ." (Pierce, 4). Initiative in new adventures was left to the state, partly because of the general inadequacy of private investment funds (Heath, 1, 47-48), but just as often because individuals seeking profit are pictured as cautious to the point of timidity. Even where such a financial community as New York made available more than adequate liquid capital, the spirit of caution prevailed. William H. Aspinwall, John V. L. Pruyn, Edwin D. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Russell Sage moved in to form the New York Central after communities had taken the initial risks, and not before (Pierce, 10). Further, the movement of the substantial private capital that was invested before 1860 is ascribed to community spirit rather than to the hope of gain (Heath, 1, 44-46). Merchants of Baltimore, Charleston, or Savannah sponsored connections with the interior as a program of "metropolitan mercantilism" that would benefit them in a general rather than a particular way. Similarly, the farmers of

Wisconsin had not turned speculators when, between 1850 and 1857, they gave nearly \$5,000,000 in mortgage notes to railroad builders; they were investing in regional prosperity (Taylor, 98).

These opinions are disquieting in view of the current interest in "entrepreneurial" history. The reviewer is certain that the right hand of the Committee on Research in Economic History knows what its left hand is doing, but there is little evidence to prove it. For instance, in the most important recent contribution from the entrepreneurial school, Thomas C. Cochran's *Railroad Leaders, 1845-1890*, the author takes only incidental and inconclusive notice of public aids other than land grants.⁴ This isolation of individual endeavors from public efforts seems all the more curious in view of the fact that the Goodrich-Heath hypothesis describes an American System in which state and private initiative are fully compatible. Continued separation of the themes prevents desirable refinement of both. Greater offenders in this regard are the authors reviewed here whose exclusive concern with public aspects of the mixed corporation permits them to avoid analysis of its private parts. The corporate agency for community action was so mixed an instrument that neither description from the point of view of the state nor analysis from the position of the entrepreneur can alone give a proper view of its growth. Public efforts to employ corporations for social ends deserve their overdue notice, but private contributions remain matters of consequence.

As an early American institution, to be sure, the corporation was a public school for enterprise. Its graduates were never very loyal, but they were no less obligated to it for their experience with major engineering projects, their knowledge of managerial problems, and their skill at gathering and handling large capital. Its modern "private" form was a very late achievement:

The attributes of peculiar economic efficiency, of limited liability, and of perpetual freedom from state interference were . . . not present at the birth of the American business corporation. Divested of these characteristics, the form assumes a new significance. At its origin in Massachusetts the corporation was conceived as an agency of the government, endowed with public attributes, exclusive privileges, and political power, and designed to serve a social function for the State. Turnpikes, not trade, banks, not land speculation, were its province because the community, not the enterprising capitalists, marked out its sphere of activity (Handlin 2, 22).

In Pennsylvania, of 2,333 business corporations chartered by special act, 1790-1860, 64.17 per cent were in the field of transport, 7.2 per cent in

⁴ Thomas C. Cochran, *Railroad Leaders 1845-1890. The Business Mind in Action* (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 17-18, 96-98, 184, 189-94, 200-1.

banking, 11.4 per cent in insurance, 7.72 per cent for manufacturing, 2.79 per cent for water, 3.21 per cent for gas, and 3.77 per cent in miscellaneous categories — the form, in other words, was predominantly employed for works of public utility (Hartz, 2, 38). Society, in creating agents to perform social services, attempted through the several states to keep a firm hand both on the evolving corporate agents, and on the quality of the services the agents rendered. At the very least cities and states attempted to protect their investments in transportation companies, and at most they attempted to harness and direct growing corporate power. Both the minimum and maximum attempts were on the whole failures. In the end, society sought the measure of its achievement in the intangibles of community growth and prosperity; there were no other measures, for communities lost their money and they lost control of their corporations.

The state struggle to maintain controls, however, left the issue in doubt for a very long time. In the first place the chartering power was maintained until after the Civil War as a means of potential corporate regulation. The Dartmouth College Doctrine did not break legislative power over the state's creations; it only invited more careful charter limitations (Cadman, 426, 429; Hartz, 2, 236–52; Primm, 35–52). Corporate charters included detailed specifications on the size and power of directorates, the liability of stockholders and officers, the nature of capital structures, and on the details of the operations the organizations might attempt. Regulation of corporate services was generally undertaken. Banks were restricted to collection of interest rates specified in charters, and were often required to reserve a certain part of their loans for named classes. Dividends were controlled by law, especially when specie payments had been suspended (Hartz, 2, 258; Primm, 26–28). Public utilities were subjected to rate regulation, to requirements that certain customers get preferential treatment, and to the maintenance of minimum service schedules (Hartz, 2, 258–60). Illustration of the extent of detailed control might be expanded indefinitely for there were almost as many specific regulations as there were charters.

Effective administration of these laws proved possible only when the regulating authority worked toward reasonably defined and sensibly limited ends. Pennsylvania, equipped with the most ambitious regulatory program, failed in almost all her objectives. The reporting system by which the state's auditor-general kept in touch with state investments broke down completely; state officials responsible for public shares in mixed corporations were assigned more duties than they could identify, much less discharge; and legislative investigating committees proved to be clumsy and inadequate instruments of control (Hartz, 2, 96–103, 262–67). In Virginia, on the other hand, an excellent reporting system was maintained. The Virginia Board of

Public Works avoided detailed problems in the administration of mixed corporations, and concentrated on the protection of the state's financial interests, and on the provision of expert engineering services to enterprise. Even when the board controlled a majority interest in a project, it left to private hands the detailed responsibilities of management (Goodrich, 3, 378-83). In Maryland, where the state and the City of Baltimore selected a majority of the B & O directors until 1867, a similarly effective review of financial and engineering detail was maintained. Baltimore treated the road as a public institution as long as the city had a stake in it; the City Council was seeking wage raises for B & O employees as late as 1880 (Goodrich & Segal, 5, 27).

The nature of the alliance between politics and trade cannot be revealed by facts drawn only from the records of public authorities. For one thing, public directors in mixed corporations were often private stockholders in their own right: the Virginia Board, in fact, required such a display of "interest" by its agents after 1847 (Goodrich, 3, 378-9). The distinction between politician and entrepreneur was consistently vague; three mayors of Baltimore, for instance, served as presidents of railroads aided by the city. John W. Garrett, president of the B & O from 1858 to 1884, was not master of his railroad until he was master of the state of Maryland. He continued then to welcome public subscriptions to the road's development, but he preferred control to remain in private hands (Goodrich & Segal, 5, 19-20, 28-32). Harry Pierce's analysis of the battle between capitalists of Albany and Troy, New York, for control of the western trade, reveals the difficulty of judging such public endeavors as Troy's municipally owned road in the narrow context of either "public" or "private" enterprise (Pierce, 60-81).

Analysis of the intimate association of public and private officials has for the most part been avoided by the authors considered; they have tended to concentrate instead on themes demonstrating a sharp division between public and private interests. In particular they have emphasized the persistent anticorporate spirit evident throughout the nation until deep into the nineteenth century. Abundant evidence has been resurrected to demonstrate popular expression of traditional hostility to concentrated power, to the grant of privilege and monopoly, and to the mysterious or dishonest manipulations by which irresponsible corporate managers maintained themselves. Small businessmen and conservative investors feared corporations, and the public often felt misused by them. These sentiments, however, appear not to have controlled state policies; chartering programs were constantly expanded, and the form was made available to every type of business. The most distinct policy change related to the anticorporate spirit was the frequent adoption of general incorporation laws. Studies of the gen-

eral incorporation movement in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Missouri, however, reveal it to be something other than a Jacksonian extension of privilege to all comers. For enterprisers, general laws in these states were rigid and unwelcome rules written by men who wanted to restrict corporate power and growth. They were not employed by businessmen, who continued to seek and get the special charters given freely until after the Civil War. Even the Democrats, who tended to be authors of the laws, seemed to be satisfying emotional needs rather than executing serious policy; they passed general laws, and then continued in the same sessions to grant special privileges on request (Handlin, 3, 233-5; Cadman, 431-8; Hartz, 2, 38-42; Primm, 54-62).

While communities indulged their anticorporate emotions, they continued to charter, regulate, and subsidize in their search for necessary social services. The retreat from public investment came only after the railroads had been built, and usually under the pressure of major economic crises. Increasingly, though, the regulatory effort was designed for the protection of public funds, rather than for the direction of corporate behavior. Massachusetts, in fact, demonstrated no other purpose from the start (Kirkland, I, 325). State activity declined sharply in the early 1840's, and then revived for a briefer season in the 1850's. The local aid movement reached its climax after the Civil War, before the substantial reaction of the 1870's (Goodrich, 6, 145-52). The retreat from aid by the cities was accompanied by widespread effort to dishonor municipal bonds; communities were without scruple in their efforts to repudiate debts blamed on dishonest promoters, incapable builders, and venal public officials (Pierce, 84-86; Goodrich, 6, 152-5; Beard, 16).

The retreat was not universal, and the sense of having been cheated was not generally shared. Bangor and Baltimore continued to subsidize, and in the southern states the Civil War only delayed for a season the Reconstruction climax of state aid. The financial record of the southern states had been good, the roads well built, and the hope of public profit reasonable (Heath, 2, 250-2). Communities, moreover, had never staked their hopes on business balance sheets. Only one city in 25 made a profit from railroad investments in New York, but 85 per cent of the cities subsidizing got the improved transport for which they had worked. Public losses were probably no greater than those of early private investors, and the communities had more to show for their effort (Pierce, 127). Massachusetts suffered a \$9,500,000 loss on her \$28,856,396 Hoosac Tunnel expenditures; profits went to the "tunnel ring" in the northwestern part of the state. But early in the twentieth century 60 per cent of Boston's exports flowed east through the "great bore" of Massachusetts politics, and all New England depended heavily on

this gateway to the West (Kirkland, I, 430-2). In Virginia a committee of the Senate, balancing profit and loss on the ante-bellum effort, concluded in 1876 that state investments had been justified by the increased wealth of the whole area served (Goodrich, 3, 387). The state-owned and operated Western and Atlantic Railroad of Georgia was not only the first railroad to penetrate the Appalachian Chain; the road won for the state control of western imports into the eastern cotton belt. Georgia, whose public planners share with the builders of the Erie Canal the greatest reputations in the improvements field, has long been recognized as the executor of a "master-stroke in railway policy."⁵

. . . Conclusions invited by summary of the 25 books and articles digested in the preceding pages tend to take the form of questions rather than assertions. The significance of the literature reviewed cannot be established until the themes suggested are tested in a more general synthesis than has been attempted by any of the authors referred to here. At present the works present an extended and more exact analysis of the spirit, policies, and achievements of the internal improvements era. This much is clear gain. The considerable influence of the newly reported theory and detail is measured by the prominence accorded government as sponsor of enterprise by George Rogers Taylor in the most recent volume of the Rinehart *Economic History of the United States*. But the most basic reappraisal of the internal improvements movement can scarcely be regarded as "new" in any bold sense; the subject is too much a staple of American economic history, and has for too long been a principal retreat for Ph.D. students seeking thesis topics. Also, more than 50 years have passed since Guy S. Callender contributed a brilliant explanation for state accumulation of \$200,000,000 in capital for investment in ante-bellum industrial development, and if two more generations pass before the current version of the Callender thesis is further refined, then the recent burst of scholarly energy may not seem very significant.

One can hope for alternative developments. Taken together, the works reviewed now end on a tentative note, and leave unresolved some of the more fundamental questions they raise. Studies of the theory and practice of local aid, for instance, reveal no changes in the public mind that justify continued use of the Civil War as a convenient point to close off the story of government activity. The absence of the Federal government from the new literature is inexplicable, particularly during the 1860's and 1870's, when Washington assumed for the states so many of their services to enterprise. A fresh approach to Federal sponsorship of economic growth, under-

⁵ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *A History of Transportation in the East Cotton Belt to 1860* (New York, 1913), p. 334.

taken in knowledge of the traditions that descended to national officers from the era of state aid, might give a new look to Radical Republican policy. The decade of monetary reform, tariff revolution, and resource alienation has been so rudely handled in the liberal historical tradition that the postwar era is remembered for corrupt deviations, rather than as a time for logical extension of established public procedures. Yet the story of public risk-taking and private profit-making does not appear to have been altered very much by transfer of the issues to the Federal sphere. The Goodrich-Heath explanations and chronology for government intervention and withdrawal might add as much meaning to Federal policy as they did to the lesser efforts by states and cities. A further test of the thesis certainly seems merited; controversies on the role of government seem almost interchangeable as the decades pass. The same angry words echo out of debates in widely separated eras, whether the subject is the delivery of monopoly powers to the Camden and Amboy, the sale of the Main Line System to the Pennsylvania Railroad, the alienation of the trans-Mississippi West, or, for that matter, the negotiation of the Dixon-Yates Contract. Perhaps historians, in their dismay at certain memories they report, have too long delayed resignation before a persistent theme in the nation's economic development — the incorrigible willingness of American public officials to seek the public good through private negotiations.

The detail of these negotiations should be pursued with infinite care. No one has undertaken extended or precise description of the way public and private obligations were combined by officers and public guardians of antebellum mixed corporations. Their compromise of sometimes contradictory duties, nonetheless, established ruling conventions for postwar economic organization. The mixed railroad corporation was not only parent to "big" business in the United States; its leaders also defined the character of business-government relationships, the duties of corporation to public, and the responsibility of manager to investor. Customary procedures and standards of behavior for managers of the modern corporation were thus conceived in ideological twilight, and had become habitual before the individual entrepreneur achieved a firm grip on the corporate form. Perhaps from the divided loyalties of the public-spirited men who planned so boldly for early community growth there emerged the ethical confusion characteristic of subsequent corporate behavior. Speculation on this point needs support from more abundant and specific fact than is yet available from the era of the mixed corporation.

To studies of the continuing association of government and enterprise should be added the equally unbroken theme of state regulatory efforts. The hiatus between stories of state control policies before and after the war be-

comes increasingly hard to justify, particularly after recent indictment of the view that "Granger" laws were the product of agrarian discontent.⁶ Just as individual enterprisers of the forties and fifties had joined in unsuccessful efforts to reduce corporate power, so, in the sixties and seventies, merchants and shippers maintained and strengthened control mechanisms. The considerable complexity of the postwar laws may possibly reflect long years of uninterrupted experience and concern with protection of the public interest. The only major break in regulatory policy appears to lie in the uneven assumption by the Federal government of earlier state responsibilities. Even at Washington, state patterns were repeated; controls, whatever the level of government, tended to lag about a generation behind aids.

The substantial energies of government, though, were employed more often for help than for hindrance to enterprise. The broad and well-documented theme reviewed here is that of public support for business development. Official vision and public resources have been associated so regularly with private skill and individual desire that the combination may be said to constitute a principal determinant of American economic growth. Internal improvements dominated the association in ante-bellum years, but opportunities for broader use of the alliance multiplied as controls over the economy became more centralized. Resolute Federal decision was in time revealed to be a key to remarkable productive achievement, most notably during the wars of the twentieth century. States and cities meanwhile transformed their record of debt from millions to billions as they constructed the nation's highways and public buildings, and extended their public services; B. U. Ratchford's analysis of American state debts might serve as an outline for a score of theses on the influence of Keynesian experiments, before Keynes. Rising constantly from the impulse to public-spirited undertakings, moreover, was the neomercantilism of regions and provinces of the American economy which came to replace the earlier and simpler competition of cities and states. Commercial clubs in the cities, industrial commissions in the states, and governors' conferences in the regions all joined in sponsorship of industrial expansion.⁷ The story sprawls out to ungovernable proportions, to tax exemptions, police-guaranteed labor discipline, municipal power-plant construction, and on to RFC, TVA, and AEC. Even communities in Mississippi, the very oldest and deepest of the southern states, have in the past 14 years spent \$29,206,000 in the construction of free factories for 92 enterprises who have agreed to locate there. From the grass roots putting up shoots before Chamber of Commerce buildings to the Office of the Presi-

⁶ George H. Miller, "Origins of the Iowa Granger Law," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XL (1954), 657-80.

⁷ Robert A. Lively, "The South and Freight Rates: Political Settlement of an Economic Argument," *Journal of Southern History*, XIV (1948), 357-84.

dent's Council of Economic Advisors there can be documented the unceasing pressure for public sponsorship of economic growth.

Milton Heath, in the earliest contribution to the literature here considered, described the public aid movement of ante-bellum years as possibly the "last great associative effort on American soil" (Heath, 2, 60). In this judgment he was probably as wrong as other authors who have analyzed the internal improvements effort as something unique in the American experience. The distant historical phenomenon they report proves very close at hand. Instead of the last great associative effort, they have revealed theory and practice for the first of continuing efforts to associate the massive powers of government with the skill of enterprise. Historians have been unaccountably slow in seeking the general themes of this story; they catalogue the plans of a Hamilton, a Gallatin, or a Clay, but they have ignored the rapid translation of these schemes into essential elements of a lasting American System. The notable accomplishment of the authors reviewed lies in the bold step they have taken down the road that leads from Hamiltonian dreams toward the mixed economy of contemporary America. This road is not yet fully marked, but its general direction is now clear. Further studies of government's partnership with enterprise may reveal it to be one of the major routes connecting early American hopes with recent material achievements.

The following list of books and articles reviewed is arranged to serve as an index to specific data employed in the text. Review-style citation is utilized, where reference is to material in the subject literature. The several contributions of a single author are numbered to simplify identification of the work cited. E. C. Kirkland's study of New England railroads, G. R. Taylor's general history of the ante-bellum period, and G. S. Callender's seminal article are grouped with the works below so that they can be cited conveniently, but no effort is made to summarize their generally known contributions.

Earl S. Beard, "Local Aid to Railroads in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History*, L (1952),

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John W. Cadman, Jr., *The Corporation in New Jersey. Business and Politics 1791-1875* (Cambridge, 1949).

Guy S. Callender, "The Early Transportation and Banking Enterprises of the States in Relation to the Growth of Corporations," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XVII (1902-1903), 111-62.

Carter Goodrich

1. "Public Spirit and American Improvements," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, XCII (1948), 305-9.
2. "National Planning of Internal Improvements," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXIII (1948), 16-44.
3. "The Virginia System of Mixed Enterprise. A Study of State Planning of Internal Improvements," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXIV (1949), 355-87.
4. "Local Planning of Internal Improvements," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXVI (1951), 411-45.
5. with Harvey H. Segal, "Baltimore's Aid to Railroads. A Study in the Municipal Planning of Internal Improvements," *Journal of Economic History*, XIII (1953), 2-35.

6. "The Revulsion Against Internal Improvements," *Journal of Economic History*, X (1950), 145-69.

Bray Hammond

1. "Banking in the Early West: Monopoly, Prohibition and Laissez Faire," *Journal of Economic History*, VIII (1948), 1-25.
2. "Jackson, Biddle, and the Bank of the United States," *Journal of Economic History*, VII (1947), 1-23.
3. "Free Banks and Corporations: The New York Free Banking Act of 1838," *Journal of Political Economy*, XLIV (1936), 184-209.

Oscar Handlin

1. "Laissez-Faire Thought in Massachusetts, 1790-1880," *Journal of Economic History*, III, *Supplement* (1943), 55-65.
2. with Mary Flug Handlin, "Origins of the American Business Corporation," *Journal of Economic History*, V (1945), 1-23.
3. with Mary Flug Handlin, *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Government in the American Economy. Massachusetts, 1774-1861* (New York, 1947).

Louis Hartz

1. "Laissez Faire Thought in Pennsylvania, 1776-1860," *Journal of Economic History*, III, *Supplement* (1943), 66-77.
2. *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought: Pennsylvania, 1776-1860* (Cambridge, 1948).

Milton S. Heath

1. "Public Railroad Construction and the Development of Private Enterprise in the South before 1861," *Journal of Economic History*, X, *Supplement* (1950), 40-53.
2. "Public Co-operation in Railroad Construction in the Southern United States to 1861" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1937).
3. "Laissez Faire in Georgia, 1732-1860," *Journal of Economic History*, III, *Supplement* (1943), 78-100.

Frederick K. Henrich, "The Development of American Laissez Faire. A General View of the Age of Washington," *Journal of Economic History*, III, *Supplement* (1943), 51-54.

Edward Chase Kirkland, *Men, Cities, and Transportation. A Study in New England History 1820-1900* (Cambridge, 1948).

Harry H. Pierce, *Railroads of New York. A Study of Government Aid, 1826-1875* (Cambridge, 1953).

James Neal Primm, *Economic Policy in the Development of a Western State, Missouri, 1820-1860* (Cambridge, 1954).

George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution 1815-1860*, Vol. 4, *The Economic History of the United States* (New York, 1951).

2

THE RAILROAD PROBLEM

Railroad practices agitated the American people more than any other issue at the turn of the century. As Robert Lively indicates, the American continent could never have been settled without the railroad network; indeed, communities throughout the country vied (and paid) for the privilege of having a railroad pass their way. The railroad was the most efficient vehicle for transporting commodities to market. Without commercial goods there could be no viable economy for the country's interior. Farmers — whom historians have generally placed at the center of the controversy over the railroads — were not alone in their dependence upon the railroad. In agricultural regions especially, merchants, bankers, real estate promoters, and processors depended intimately upon the prosperity of farmers; there was no easy separation of the interests of farmers and "businessmen."

An instrument of such manifest public interest as the railroad naturally became the subject of constant public — and political — controversy, from the initial proposition for building a line through a region to the completion of the line and its continued efforts to become a profit-earning enterprise. Even if there had been no railroad men of dubious social morality (and the industry had such men in awesome abundance) railroad directors would have had to intervene in governmental processes if only to defend their interests against their bonafide competitors, honestly misinformed critics, and a wide assortment of venal politicians. Their intervention quite as naturally evoked heated protests. Since, in a multitude of states, railroads frequently wielded power that was unrivalled, overbearing, and beyond the capacity of a state's political machinery to handle effectively, critics raised the potent issue of the railroads' corruption of democratic processes. Put in simple words by anti-railroad leaders, it became a question of whether "the people shall control the railroads, or the railroads shall continue to control the people."

Aside from the political problem, the railroads' customers compiled a long list of grievances. Rebates, overcharges, irregular service, faulty equipment, dangerous grade crossings, and various kinds of rate discrimination are just the most general of the complaints. American historians have amply detailed and documented the grievances, especially those of the farmers. [See S. J. Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade* (1921); J. D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (1931) 62-75, and F. A. Shannon, *The Farmers' Last Frontier* (1945) 173-179, 205-207.] Less popular are presentations of the problems the railroads faced, or

of the conditions that made unavoidable many of the practices of which shippers complained. Indeed, historians by and large have left the task to economists and to the special pleaders. It was a spokesman for the Association of American Railroads, for example, who helped to correct some serious misapprehensions about land subsidies to the trans-continental railways that leading historians had long helped to perpetuate. [See R. S. Henry, "The Railroad Land Grant Legend in American History Texts," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXII (Sept. 1945) 171-194. Cf. the comments on Henry's article by E. C. Kirkland, F. A. Shannon, and others, *ibid.*, XXXIII (1946) 559-578.] The best overall historical coverage of the railroad problem during the Populist-Progressive Era remains that of the Harvard economist W. Z. Ripley. [*Railroads: Rates and Regulation* (1912).] Although Ripley stood with those who urged vigorous government intervention in the railroad business, his treatment is objective. His position derived not from a feeling of rancor toward the railroads, but from his conviction that institutional remedies were needed to correct the abuses endemic in the private operation for profit of an essentially public instrumentality.

David Potter's "The Historical Development of Eastern-Southern Freight Rate Relationships," is a scholarly treatment of the railroad problem by a brilliant historian. Although he focuses on the rate structures of just two regions, Mr. Potter (Professor of History, Stanford University), in a clear and succinct fashion familiarizes the reader with the extraordinarily complex nature of the freight-rate structure in general. Such information is indispensable to every serious student of anti-railroad agitation in American history. But the article does several things more. It tells us much about what was at stake (beyond the sensibilities of certain aggrieved farmers and merchants) in the perennial dispute over control of the industry, not only in the Populist-Progressive Era, but in the 'thirties and 'forties as well. The article itself, written early in 1947, comprises part of a "symposium" on a dispute that had been before the ICC since the mid-1930's and was currently before the Supreme Court. As Mr. Potter explains, as early as the 1880's the country's railroads had established a system of rate classifications for each of several "territories." For various reasons (which Mr. Potter presents), the average class rates of Eastern (or "Official") Territory were lowest, and those of Southern Territory were the highest. Through their (private) traffic associations, the railroad managers had long given great force to a rate structure that placed southern shippers at a serious disadvantage. The creation of the ICC in 1887 and the power to determine rates given to it by Congress in 1910 (Mann-Elkins Act) did nothing to alter the situation; indeed, by not acting, the ICC tacitly made traffic agreements among the railway association members enforceable in the courts, which would not have happened if there had been no ICC. (The NRA of the New Deal had a comparable practical effect for many of the otherwise non-enforceable trade association agreements of the 'twenties.) With the

encouragement of the Transportation Act of 1920, almost every railroad in the country came to be included in the traffic associations that governed rates.

As Mr. Potter notes at the beginning of his study, rates are designed to accommodate traffic conditions, but they can also be *used* to determine *what*, *whether*, and *whence* traffic moves. One consequence of the indirect legalization of the territorial differentials was the tendency for the pattern of competitive advantages among the railroads' "constituents" to become frozen. Railroad rates set in the late 19th century to encourage the movement of staple crops in Southern Territory, foodstuffs in the Midwest, and manufactured goods in the East, continued to exert the same influence in the mid-20th century. To southern political leaders in the 'thirties, the territorial rate differentials seemed influential in keeping the South in its impoverished staple-crop condition; and, as Mr. Potter remarks, there is little doubt that eastern railroad men and their manufacturer constituents made use of the territorial differentials almost as a regional protective tariff to bolster them against the challenge of nascent competitors elsewhere in the country.

In 1945, in the famous Class Rate Decision, the ICC at last declared the territorial rate differentials illegal. The decision was upheld by the Supreme Court in May, 1947, shortly before Mr. Potter's article went to press. For an insightful follow-up of the event, see R. A. Lively's "The South and Freight Rates: Political Settlement of an Economic Argument," *Journal of Southern History*, XIV (Aug. 1948) 357-384. W. Joubert's *Southern Freight Rates in Transition* (1949) is more comprehensive, with three chapters of historical background.

The statistical charts that appear in the original article have been omitted here.

The Historical Development of Eastern-Southern Freight Rate Relationships

DAVID M. POTTER

I. INTRODUCTION

For at least the past decade, the railway freight-rate question has been recognized as one of the major issues in the adjustment of the South to the

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national economy. As such it has been much discussed, but even the facts of the question are still rarely understood, and the historical origin of regional differentials has been almost wholly neglected.

Such neglect finds its explanation, at least in part, in the fact that few American institutions, economic or other, rival the freight-rate structure in complexity. In quantitative terms, this complexity takes the form of an accumulation of separate rates estimated at ten million pages on file with the Interstate Commerce Commission. In analytical terms, it takes the form of a situation in which factors and conditions are so intricate that few generalities can be stated without extended qualification, and few conclusions can be reached without putting the data through a sequence of processes.

There is no basic uniformity in rates, either according to the mileage traveled or according to the weight or bulk of the load carried. *A priori*, one might expect such uniformity, but the fact is that not even the severest critics of the existing system demand it, for it is recognized that goods must travel at a rate that will permit them to go to market, and uniformity does not allow this. For instance, California oranges must go to New York at a rate which will enable them to share the market with Florida oranges which have travelled less than one-third as far, and coal, valued by the ton, must move at a rate which it can pay, quite as much as quinine, valued by the ounce. One railroad official has said, "A rate is nothing more or less than an effort to comply with the necessities of commerce. A rate is no good if it is not moving traffic. You have got to make rates based on what the conditions are, and you cannot use a formula."¹ He might have added that the entire body of freight rates is not merely one containing differentials — regional and other — but that it consists essentially of an immeasurable mass of carefully adjusted differentials, in which fairness should always be an objective, but in which uniformity cannot be. In such an intricate system no safe generalization can be derived from any individual rate, and no individual rate can be understood without a recognition of a number of basic features of the structure.

One of these basic features is the system of classification. Different commodities, obviously, may be conveniently grouped or classed together according to their similarity in bulk, value, or the like. Accordingly, a range of categories or classes is set up, and almost every conceivable article eligible for transport is classified in one or another of these categories. If the same classifications applied throughout the country one could analyze the ques-

¹ Testimony of A. F. Cleveland, in *Hearings before Committee on Interstate Commerce on S. 942*, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. 1059 (1943). Mr. Cleveland might have added that a rate is sometimes a device for determining what traffic shall move, and to what destinations.

tion of rates purely in terms of the tariffs which applied to each class; but in fact there are, regionally, three separate classification areas — southern, western, and eastern or official — and articles which fall into the highest class in one of these territories may be assigned to a quite different class in another. Thus, of the 10,305 types of articles which are classified in both official and southern territory, at carload rates, only 4,934 are placed in class groups which correspond to one another (and, as will appear, the fact that they correspond does not mean that they will pay the same rate), while 1,344 are placed in a lower bracket in the South and 4,027 are in a lower bracket in the East.²

Classification, however, does not determine the tariff. It determines only what relation an article will bear to other articles in the payment of tariff, and, if it is not first class, what percentage of the first-class rate it will pay. The actual determination of tariffs or rates is quite separate, and where there are only three classification territories in the United States, there are five major rate territories. East of the Mississippi, these include the eastern or official territory, extending south roughly to the Ohio and into southern Virginia, and the southern territory, embracing all that does not fall within official territory. West of the Mississippi, the trunk-line, southwestern, and mountain-Pacific territories divide the field. The rate structures vary substantially among these territories, and until very recently the Interstate Commerce Commission has treated them as separate entities, with considerations applying to one territory not necessarily operative in another.

The interdependence of classification and rate making lays pitfalls for the analyst. Thus, an article in the South may pay a higher charge than the same article in the East either because it is in a higher class than the eastern article or because, although in an equivalent class (both first class, for instance), the rates for the two classes show a disparity. The freight charge may be raised or lowered on an article, without changing rates, by moving it from one class to another, or without changing the class, by altering the rate for that class. This provides complexity enough within a territory, but when an article crosses the Ohio or traverses the state of Virginia, it moves into both a different classification and a different rate territory. The interterritorial complexities which result are not to be resolved by any simple process.

As if the intricacies of classification, of rate making, and of dissimilar territorial areas for each did not impart sufficient complexity to the subject, a third basic feature which must be recognized is that the bulk of America's railway freight traffic does not move on class rates at all, but on what are

² Board of Investigation and Research, *Report on Interterritorial Freight Rates*, H. R. Doc. No. 303, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. 25 (1943).

called commodity rates.³ Many types of products could not compete successfully in the market if they moved on class rates, and therefore certain specific commodities, especially when they represent a substantial traffic, often receive a special rate from one specific point to another, in one direction. These are commodity rates, and though sometimes bearing a loose relationship to class rates,⁴ they are wholly diverse, subject to no formula, governable by no generalizations, and susceptible to evaluation only one by one.

Where such intricacies exist, it becomes a major problem of analysis and research to demonstrate to what extent the rates of one territory are higher than another. This question has been treated elsewhere in this symposium and has received elaborate analysis in previous studies.⁵ No necessity requires that it be reexamined here. But in order to avoid discussing the historical origins of a situation without indicating what that situation is, it may be well to summarize the nature of the regional differentials. To begin with, it readily appears that first-class goods in southern territory pay a higher rate than first-class goods in official territory. This difference is shown in cents per mile per hundred pounds in a ratio of 79 cents to 62 cents for 100 miles; \$1.12 to 80 cents for 200; \$1.73 to \$1.22 for 500; and \$2.49 to \$1.82 for 1,000.⁶ Of course most articles which take class rates do not take first class,

³ An analysis of all railway traffic throughout the United States, made on September 23, 1942, showed that, excluding less-than-carload lots (which were only 1.65% of the tonnage), 14.8% of the carloads originating on that day moved on class rates and 85.2% on commodity rates. The class traffic, however, contributed 22.4% of the revenue, and commodity traffic 77.6%. *Id.* at 2.

⁴ Authorities agree as to the existence of some correlation between class rates and commodity rates, but disagree vigorously as to the degree of relationship. See, e.g., *Hearings before Subcommittee of the Committee on Interstate Commerce on S. Res. 99, 76th Cong., 1st Sess. 182-292 (1939)*. Material on pp. 182, 186, 221, 223, 244, and 255 illustrates the tendency to link class and commodity rates, while material on pp. 185 and 292 emphasizes their separateness. C. E. Widell, General Traffic Manager, Tennessee Products Corp., declared (at 378), "We have an uneven rate structure in the South, and from the South to the North. . . . It has always been uneven. There has, however, grown up in a fairly uniform, reasonable development . . . a commodity rate structure in the South that is most vital to the South. It applies on lumber and logs, brick, sand and gravel, pig-iron, coal and coke, and pulpwood, taking in practically what we call our basic commodities. . . . It is undoubtedly as low as a similar basic commodity rate structure in the North."

⁵ The principal authorities are: J. Haden Alldredge, *The Interterritorial Freight Rate Problem of the United States*, published as H. R. Doc. No. 264, 75th Cong., 1st Sess. (1937); Alldredge, *Supplemental Phases of the Interterritorial Freight Rate Problem of the United States*, published as H. R. Doc. No. 271, 76th Cong., 1st Sess. (1939); and Board of Investigation and Research, *Report on Interterritorial Freight Rates*, H. R. Doc. No. 303, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. (1943).

⁶ Board of Investigation and Research, *Report on Interterritorial Freight Rates*, cited *supra*, note 5, at 18-19. It should be observed, however, that despite the higher rate level in the South, the average freight revenue per ton-mile for the first-class railroads in the East in 1941 was 9.89 cents; in the South, 9.46 cents. This was because the lower grade of freight offset the higher rates. *Id.* at 152.

but elaborate computations have shown that the average relationship of all class rates to first class is about the same in southern and in official territories.⁷ Therefore the first-class differentials may be regarded as applicable for the entire class-rate structure. On this basis, investigators have concluded that southern class rates are 39 per cent higher than class rates in official territory.

These figures are impressive, but what of the commodity rates, with their great significance in moving the major part of the traffic? For this type of rate no general scale applies, and conclusions must be based upon an accumulation of comparisons for individual commodities. Investigators who have made such item-by-item comparisons conclude that the advantage consistently lies with manufacturers and producers who ship within official territory and that "on most of the commodities there are substantial regional differences in the levels, with higher rates in the South and West than in Eastern territory. In most instances, but not in all, the relative differences in rate levels are less than the differences in the levels of first-class rates in the same territories."⁸ Most significant, perhaps, is the conclusion that where the South enjoys favorable commodity rates these have usually applied to agricultural products and raw materials, rather than to manufactured goods.

In the movement between territories, also, there are differentials, both on class and commodity rates, adverse to the South. At one time, it was the practice to construct these interterritorial rates simply by adding the established rate for that part of the haul which lay within southern territory to the established rate for the part which lay within official. But this had the effect of charging for two short hauls rather than one long one, and since the short haul always costs more in proportion to the distance the result was usually a higher rate for the interterritorial haul than either territory would have charged for an internal haul of the same distance. This was palpably unfair, and the practice has now been eliminated. The more normal condition, in recent years, has been that the interterritorial haul would take a rate intermediate between the rates for hauls of similar distances in

⁷ *Id.* at 25-27; see also Alldredge, *Interterritorial Freight Rate Problem of the United States*, cited *supra*, note 5, at 11-12.

⁸ Quotation from Board of Investigation and Research, *Report on Interterritorial Freight Rates*, 148. Conclusion based on analysis of seventeen groups of goods taking commodity rates. *Id.* at 92-150, 185-222. *The Interterritorial Freight Rate Problem of the United States*, at 27-32, and *Supplemental Phases of the Interterritorial Freight Rate Problem*, cited *supra*, note 5, at 15-18, 41-48 contain extensive comparative data on commodity rates. See also data in *Hearings before Committee on Interstate Commerce on S. 942*, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. 137, 141, 238 (1943), and testimony of A. J. Rihe, of Birmingham, Ala., *id.* at 323: "Except textiles and cast-iron pipe, I know of no manufactured commodity in which the South excels the North [as to commodity rates]."

the two territories involved. At first glance this splitting of the difference seems entirely reasonable, but it is actually at this very point that the differential really operates to cause sectional advantages, for the northern shipper sending goods, say five hundred miles, to a point within southern territory does so at an advantage over the southern shipper who ships for the same distance to the same point. In contrast, the southern shipper, sending goods five hundred miles to a point within official territory, does so at a disadvantage in the competition with the northern shipper who ships for the same distance to the same point. Since the great market of the nation is the eastern market, the differential borne by southern manufacturers seeking access to this market has been aptly compared to a protective tariff operating in the interest of eastern industry.

Accepting the findings that these differentials exist, without attempting to determine whether the degree and importance of their disadvantage may have been overstated, it is the purpose of this paper to inquire into three questions: First, it will seek to show how distinctive economic features in the South caused the evolution of a regional rate structure sharply differentiated from that of the East. Secondly, it will deal with the process by which the differentials which grew up through the action of individual railroads were collectivized and institutionalized, as it were, directly by the group action of railroads, and indirectly by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Finally, it will consider the extent to which interest groups have sought to perpetuate the institutionalized rate structure as a bulwark of sectional advantage for industry in the East.

II. ECONOMIC EVOLUTION OF SOUTHERN RATE DIFFERENTIALS

From the day that the Charleston & Hamburg Railroad made its first run, in November, 1832, southern railroads have faced a number of fairly constant economic conditions which inevitably shaped their rate policy and rate structure along distinctive sectional lines.

One of the most basic of these factors was the low density of population. In population per square mile the South has always remained a half century or more behind the New England and Middle Atlantic states, and this has meant for the railroads that they must maintain a greater ratio of track in proportion to the number of people served, or, to express it in another way, that they could not distribute the cost of operation per mile over as large a number of shippers. In recent years a very thorough study has indicated that this population factor is no longer an economic handicap to the South, largely because eastern railroads find the advantage of population density

offset by the disadvantage of high terminal costs in the great urban centers,⁹ but historically there seems little doubt that the thinly settled character of the southern country was detrimental to the prosperity of the southern roads. This must have been especially true when the population was less than half as great as today, and it was recognized by the United States Industrial Commission in 1902 as a primary cause of higher rates.¹⁰ The full extent of this disparity in density of settlement can be shown only by a statistical comparison, and for this purpose the states now in official territory are compared, in Table 1, with those now in southern or southwestern.¹¹ From this it will appear that, while the density of southern population greatly increased from 1850 to 1900, and again from 1900 to 1940, it remained less than half of that in the East.

A second basic feature of the southern economy was the fact that the principal products, and therefore the principal outbound shipments, were agricultural staples, of which cotton was foremost. From the standpoint of railroad transport, this concentration upon the staples had a number of implications. Since these goods, as raw materials, could not be moved except at rather low rates, it meant that the railroads had to haul them on a small, or even negligible, margin of profit, and compensate themselves by unusually high rates on higher-grade goods. In other words, in the distribution of the rates the incidence of a low rate on this large segment of the traffic meant a disproportionately high rate on other freight. In 1876 the president of the Louisville & Nashville testified that the cost to his company of transportation was 1.23 cents per ton per mile, and that the average charge on freight moving north was also 1.23 cents per ton per mile, which meant no profits, but that the charges on southbound freight averaged 1.87 cents.¹² Furthermore, since the principal products were crops, the movement was highly seasonal, and the railroads found it necessary to secure most of their annual earnings in the four months between September and January.¹³ And as compared with industrial enterprise, which requires raw materials and produces goods in a constant flow, agriculture provides an astonishingly light traffic, for it requires no raw materials and produces goods only once a year.

⁹ The most recent and exhaustive analysis is Ford K. Edwards, *Rail Freight Service Costs in the Various Rate Territories of the United States*, Sen. Doc. No. 63, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. 8 (1943).

¹⁰ 19 Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission 374 (1902).

¹¹ [Table I, comparing population densities of states in official territory with those in southern and southwestern territories, is omitted here.]

¹² Testimony of Albert Fink, President of the Louisville & Nashville, in U.S. Bureau of Statistics, *First Annual Report on the Internal Commerce of the United States*, Appendix, 8, 27, 28 (1876).

¹³ William Z. Ripley, *Railroads: Rates and Regulation* 381 (1912).

The contrast was strikingly illustrated in 1899 by a railroad president who said:

To show the difference in the density of traffic south of the Potomac and north, take Mr. Carnegie's concern at Pittsburgh; they produce a tonnage in and out that is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ times the tonnage of the entire cotton crop of the United States; under the control of one man. This, of course, is not in value, but it is the tons moved, from the railroads' standpoint. I can show you little towns in Western Pennsylvania of 10,000 inhabitants that will produce a tonnage equal to the wheat tonnage of such roads as the Great Northern.¹⁴

Somewhat related to the agricultural nature of the traffic were certain factors affecting the distance and direction of traffic movements. Most of the early southern railroads were built by or at the stimulus of coastal or river ports which wished to tap the agricultural region of the interior. The Charleston & Hamburg, the Georgia Railroad, the Central of Georgia, the Western & Atlantic, the Mobile & Ohio, the New Orleans, Jackson & Northern, and the Louisville & Nashville were all early examples of this tendency. This meant that instead of forming a through system of connecting roads — instead of serving as links in a trunk line — they reached out as conflicting radii from various cities. This, in turn, meant that they carried very little through traffic, but relied almost wholly on local traffic. It was estimated in 1887, for instance, that 80 per cent of the net earnings of the Louisville & Nashville resulted from traffic "which is moved to and from local stations."¹⁵ The handling of local traffic is more costly than hauling traffic on a through basis from seaports to interior carriers, or as an intermediary between other carriers, and this offered another handicap to the southern lines.

Later, when longer lines were put through, connecting the South with the Northeast and with the cities of the Middle West, a new difficulty arose, and this was the imbalance of northbound and southbound traffic. The South tended to send its cotton to Atlantic seaboard markets for export or for delivery to textile mills in New England, and it tended to buy its foodstuffs at Louisville or Cincinnati, thus drawing on the upper Mississippi Valley. Consequently, there was a chronic excess of northbound traffic on the seaboard, and an even more acute excess southbound in the Ohio-Mississippi Valley. This entailed the expense of hauling cars empty in one di-

¹⁴ Testimony of John K. Cowen, president, Baltimore & Ohio R. R., 4 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 318-319 (1900). See also *id.* at 279.

¹⁵ Argument of E. B. Stahlman of the Louisville & Nashville before the ICC, May 27, 1887, in *Digest of the Hearings before Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce*, Sen. Doc. No. 244, 59th Cong., 1st Sess. 307 (1906), cited hereafter as *Elkins Committee Digest*; William Z. Ripley, *Railroads: Rates and Regulation* 422 (1912).

rection. The magnitude of the disparity is shown in the fact that in 1874-75, southbound traffic on the Louisville & Nashville amounted to 157,520 tons while northbound traffic totalled only 73,410. Twelve years later, the same railroad estimated the excess of loaded cars bound south over those bound north at 57,092.¹⁶

In addition to all these difficulties of low population density, poor-grade cargo, seasonal business, one-way traffic, light volume, and local rather than through hauls, the southern railroads faced, at one time, an unusually stiff competition from waterborne carriers. In the Seventies and Eighties, river boats still plied not only the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Tennessee, but also many of the small rivers of the South, both of the coastal plain and of the Mississippi system. It was also true, at that time, that the traditional method of sending goods to New York or other northeastern points was by coastwise vessels from Atlantic or Gulf Coast ports. The railroads could secure this through traffic only in so far as they could wrest it from the water carriers, with their low rates.¹⁷

A time later came when the railroads apparently brought most of the water traffic under their domination, or at least their influence, and at that point they sometimes used the plea of steamboat competition as an excuse for certain discriminatory practices. This naturally provoked the retort that the whole emphasis upon the water-borne competition was a sham, and it apparently did become that in part. But it is incontestably true that, in the first decades after the Civil War, riverboat and coastal steamer were a real menace to railroads which were already struggling with other regional handicaps.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Elkins Committee Digest*, 311. Albert Fink, also speaking for the Louisville & Nashville, had testified in 1876 that traffic south to and north from Nashville was as follows (U.S. Bureau of Statistics, *First Annual Report of Internal Commerce of the United States*, Appendix, 29 (1876)):

	Southbound	Northbound
1871-72	161,997 tons	41,531
1872-73	168,573 tons	71,591
1873-74	158,745 tons	75,257
1874-75	157,520 tons	73,410

¹⁷ Before the Civil War the amount of cotton shipped overland by rail to northern ports or textile centers was negligible, but the traffic increased from 7,661 bales in 1855 to 108,676 in 1860, to 380,813 in 1870, and to 695,622 (out of a total crop of 4,632,313) in 1876. Even in 1876, however, rail movements were customarily combined with water shipment north of Norfolk, and there was still no record of cotton crossing the Potomac in rail transit. In the delivery of cotton to southern ports, also, railroads were encroaching upon water traffic; in 1855, Mobile had received 436,343 bales by river, none by rail; in 1875, this city received 144,263 bales by river, 230,409 by rail. U.S. Bureau of Statistics, *First Annual Report on Internal Commerce of the United States* 142, 145 (1876).

¹⁸ The importance of water competition as a justification for special rates at river towns and ports is stressed in petition of the Louisville & Nashville to the ICC and the argument of E. B. Stahlman for the Louisville & Nashville, in *Elkins Committee Digest*, 303, 308, 312, 314-318; see also testimony for Southern Railroad, *id.* at 434-435. The United

These characteristics of the traffic and of the competition had operated, by the beginning of the twentieth century, to shape a distinctive regional rate structure. The basic characteristic of this structure, as will appear, was a generally higher level of rates than prevailed north of the Potomac. Conspicuous exceptions, as will also appear, were made where local competition or the nature of the freight necessitated them. Sometimes these exceptions, because they were invidious, attracted more attention than the basic high level of rates.

Apparently rates in the South had been higher from the earliest days of railroading, for as early as 1848. Daggett's *Railroad Guide* attempted to list the number of railroads, the mileage, and the average rates per ton mile, first- and second-class, for each state. In a situation where every railroad had its own classification and its own rates the calculations could not have been precise, but they were certainly indicative, and it is striking that the states now in official territory, in almost every case, showed lower rates. The exact figures appear in Table 2 [omitted].

From the middle of the century until its end rates generally fell. Southern rates bore a share of the reduction, but relatively they remained higher than rates in the East, and, in the case of local rates (*i.e.*, rates charged between points located on the same road), did not even decline proportionately. The Interstate Commerce Commission fully demonstrated this fact in 1902, when it made an elaborate historical analysis of rates for the preceding forty years. As part of this analysis, local rates on thirty-three roads were studied in detail. Table 3 [omitted] shows the rate in cents per hundred pounds on first- and second-class commodities, as charged for trips approximating 200 miles on the lines which were in official and southern territories. This illustrates emphatically the higher level of southern local rates, and their tendency to remain fixed during a period when other regions were experiencing a reduction of such rates.

Although the southern rate structure manifested one of its most extreme

States Industrial Commission's reports contain testimony by some witnesses that this water competition was or had been a very genuine factor: Martin Knapp, Chairman, ICC, 4 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 134, 137 (1900); M. C. Markham, Illinois Central Railroad, 9 *id.* at 435-436 (1901); T. M. R. Talcott, Seaboard Air Line, 9 *id.* at 628-629; and P. J. McGovern, Chairman, Southern Classification Committee, 9 *id.* at 678. Other witnesses, including Judson Clements, Member, ICC (4 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 155 (1900)), Edward P. Wilson, of the Cincinnati Board of Trade (9 *id.* at 696-697 (1901)), and James M. Langley, Merchants Association of New York (9 *id.* at 874-875), expressed the view that water competition no longer meant anything. Langley said, "There is no competition between the coastwise water lines and the railroads" (*id.* at 875). The Commission itself spoke of water competition as a cause for low rates to certain terminal points (4 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 12 (1900)), but in its final report it spoke cautiously of rivalry by water carriers as an "alleged reason" for the long-and-short-haul discriminations, after which it proceeded to show certain cases of discrimination where no navigable waters were involved. 19 *id.* at 374-377 (1902).

differentials in the matter of local rates, the higher southern level was by no means confined to this phase, and southern class rates, generally, were much higher than those in official territory. This may be illustrated by a comparison of rates in official territory from New York to Chicago, a distance of 890 miles, and from Louisville to Atlanta, which is only 472 miles. Despite the shorter distance, rates for all classes of commodities were consistently higher from Louisville to Atlanta throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This is shown in Table 4 [omitted].

Rates within the South, therefore, had already become fixed at levels higher than those within the East. By a fairly natural extension, this meant that rates from southern points to points in the East were higher than for similar distances wholly within official territory. But while this interterritorial differential should not be minimized, it is important to recognize that (1) interterritorial rates were not as high as those wholly within the South, and (2) where southern railroads had a competitive incentive to do so, they reduced rates considerably below the norm. Both of these factors are illustrated in the rate from Atlanta to New York, which, though not nearly so low as the rate for the comparable haul in official territory from New York to Chicago, was almost as low as the much shorter haul, within southern territory, from Louisville to Atlanta. Clearly the southern road, in this case, was accepting a lower rate for its portion of the haul in order to reach the metropolitan market. No doubt it was stimulated to do so by the competition of coastwise shipping, as is indicated by the fact that between Atlanta and Chicago, where such competition did not exist, rates were substantially higher. But the longer haul from Chicago to Savannah, to connect with ocean carriers, actually cost less than the haul to Atlanta. [Shown in Table 5, omitted here.]

All this becomes extremely complex in detail, but it seems to reduce itself to a fairly simple basic policy: because of economic circumstances, southern railroads maintained a higher rate level than those in other parts of the country. This affected interterritorial rates also. But where competitive necessities or market possibilities offered an inducement, exceptions were made which mitigated, if they did not eliminate, the differential. These exceptions took various forms: on the seaboard, through traffic to North Atlantic ports received reductions to meet coastal steamer competition; within the South, river towns or others with real or artificially created competitive advantages were designated as "basing points" and as such received lower rates than neighboring communities. Here arose an easily dramatized long-and-short-haul abuse which violated the Interstate Commerce Act, became a *cause célèbre*, and was generally regarded as the characteristic feature of the south-

ern rate structure. But the low rate to the basing point stood in bold relief primarily because of the high rate level against which it operated. The primary factor was the general rate level. As the Industrial Commission declared in 1902, "Local rates have decreased very unevenly in different parts of the country. [Reduction] does not seem to have occurred in the Southern States. . . . Freight rates in the Southern States are very much higher per mile than for any other section of the country."¹⁹

Stated in different terms, this means that the southern railroads intended to levy higher rates upon the traffic of the South than eastern railroads levied upon the traffic of their region. But it does not mean that they wished to throttle southern industry. What it may signify is that, where later critics sought to encourage southern industry by destroying freight differentials, the southern railroads were prone to attack the problem by making specific exceptions to the structure of differentials. For instance, as will appear subsequently, they moved vigorously to establish rates that would place southern cotton textiles on a sound competitive basis in the northern market. In doing so at a time when the rail system of the country consisted of dozens of independent lines, they could always find a northern carrier which would respond to the inducement of extra traffic by joining them in establishing a special rate to northern markets.

So long as the differential in the rate structure represented nothing more than the policy of southern railroads to levy a higher average rate, exceptions could always be made to avoid flagrant disadvantage to southern products in northern markets. But there was clearly an economic danger for the southern economy in the existence of such differentials. This danger was greatly enhanced when the collective action of the railroads and the tacit sanction of the Interstate Commerce Commission molded these aggregations of separate differentials into sharply defined, collectivized, regional structures, with a system of "private judicature" to extend the parity of rates throughout one region and thus to sharpen the contrast with the disparity of rates in the adjoining region. The danger was further and more acutely enhanced when the railway interests of official territory began to recognize that these institutionalized rate differentials could be used as a barrier to exclude producers from other territories, and thus to monopolize the richest metropolitan markets for their own shippers.

¹⁹ [Original footnotes 19-22 have been omitted along with the tables to which they refer and subsequent footnotes are renumbered.] 19 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 373 (1902). In testimony before the Commission, a member of the ICC declared that "rates are usually lower in the north than they are in the south, both local and through," and the president of the Baltimore & Ohio, John K. Cowen, agreed that "the Southern rates I know are higher, but that is a very sparsely populated country and they are bound to be higher. . . ." 4 *id.* at 155, 318 (1900).

III. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORIAL UNITS AND REGIONAL DIFFERENTIALS

The history of a region, far more than that of a nation, deals with intangibles. The nation is an entity; it has governmental machinery, territorial boundaries, citizens, and jurisdiction. The region has none of these. The South, for instance, is not a political entity; the only political entities are twelve states, more or less. It has no citizens, and though the people are alleged to conform to a regional type, they in fact exhibit a wide range of traits, and can be considered homogeneous only by that special type of part-truth known as generalization. Of course, even the nation is not as much an entity as the terms "American policy," "American tradition," *et cetera*, would suggest, but generalization reaches a peculiarly treacherous phase when applied to regional or sectional topics.

If the freight rates of the South and of other territories had remained what they were in origin — merely the aggregation of all the rates levied by separate railroads, independently of each other — then generalizations about a "southern rate structure" would be as elusive as those about the "southern character," and would be specimens of the same fallacy of treating a mere tendency as if it were an institution. Considered individually, southern railroads vary among themselves as much as, collectively considered, they may vary from the roads of another region.²⁰ But the analyst need not generalize upon them, for they have generalized themselves. Although southern rail rates originated with separate roads, and though there yet remains some basis for independent action, the fact is that rate-making became collectivized seventy years ago, and has so remained ever since. Not, as one might suppose, by the action of the Interstate Commerce Commission, but through the work of associations of railways, later sanctioned by the Interstate Commerce Commission, a distinctive southern rate structure applicable to an explicit southern rate territory was created.

In the matter of railway rates, then, as in almost no other regional matters, the sectional tendency took a tangible institutional form. Since Apomattox, "the South" has had no boundaries, no capital, no political authority. But the Southern Classification Bureau and the Southern Freight Association have boundaries more tangible than the Confederacy ever

²⁰ "As between individual railroads in any one of the existing historic rate groups, operating costs vary both above and below the group average. If the variation of the outlying cases from the average is materially wider than any variations between two or more territorial group averages, would the substantial rights of the carrier be violated by dissolving the groups and nationalizing the freight rate structures?" Alldredge, *The Interterritorial Freight Rate Problem of the United States*, H. R. Doc. No. 264, 75th Cong., 1st Sess. 54 (1937).

achieved; their capital is Atlanta; and there they make decisions which apply from Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. The fact that a member road retains the legal right to reject the group decision and to establish an independent rate does not seriously qualify the fact that, in effect, rates are made by regional associations.

The shaping of the structure into such a distinctive sectional framework prepared the way for the normal and universal friction between various shipping interests to be formulated into sectional patterns and accentuated along sectional lines. This would have happened in any case, but the institutional structure greatly enhanced it.

As late as the 1870's and Eighties, there were countless different rate systems in the United States. The railway network consisted not of a few trunk lines, but of many little connecting roads, and each road had its own classification and its own tariffs. Some had a number of classifications, varying with the direction of the traffic or what not.²¹ At one time there were 138 separate classifications in what is now official territory alone, and the shipper consigning goods to any great distance had to plunge boldly into the unknown.

It was inevitable that, as through traffic increased and connecting lines were developed, some more general system or systems of rates would replace the impenetrable mass of separate rate schedules which had grown up in the era of unconnected roads serving local markets. But though the change itself was certain to occur, it was not certain whether this regimentation of rates would be achieved by government control or by the collective action of the railroads, nor was it certain whether several regional authorities or one national authority would emerge, though even a national authority could hardly impose a uniform national structure, in view of regional differences in the economy.

At a later time the railway system became genuinely national, but at this formative stage in the development of rate structures the railways of the country fell more or less naturally into regional groupings. The Mississippi, the Ohio, and even the Potomac provided serious barriers to uninterrupted shipment from South to North, and most of the traffic was regional. Not until 1874-1875 did James B. Eads and Albert Fink complete the first bridges which enabled rail traffic to span the broader reaches of the Missis-

²¹ Before 1887 a shipper over the Wabash Railroad might be compelled to consult six classifications: in the area of the Southern Railway & Steamship Association, eighteen classifications; in the Mississippi Valley, five; in the "revised western," nine; in the eastern trunk-line, thirteen; in western trunk-line, five. Some of these applied to traffic only in one direction. 19 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 391 (1902). In the South "the Savannah Line used nine classes, and the Charleston and Coast Lines worked five and six classes." Hudson, "The Southern Railway and Steamship Association," 5 *Quar. J. of Econ.* 70, 84 (1891).

issippi and the Ohio. With this physical and economic isolation, cooperative action naturally moved along sectional lines, and, as it happened, the first major cooperative association of railroads originated in the South. This was the Southern Railway & Steamship Association, which was formed in 1875.²²

The decade of the Seventies found southern railroads struggling to recover from the devastation of the Civil War, and to maintain their solvency upon a very small volume of traffic. Though there were numerous points where two or more roads were in competition, there was none where the volume of traffic was more than one road could have handled.²³ Competition for traffic, therefore, was intense, and had its impact upon roads so close to bankruptcy that only a minor rate war was required to finish them. The only salvation of the roads seemed to lie in an agreement to apportion all competitive traffic on a pro rata basis. But apportionment of traffic could not be stabilized without equalization of rates, and this meant that the individual roads must surrender the right to fix their own rates at competitive points.

The formation of railroad pools later came under criticism because of its monopolistic tendency, and antitrust legislation later limited the sphere of collective action. But on December 21, 1874, when the railroad representatives of the southeast met at Macon, Georgia, they did so in the unabashed conviction that group control would serve to avert the financial collapse of the southern transportation system and to eliminate recognized evils such as rebates and discriminatory charges. At a subsequent meeting in Atlanta, twenty-two railroads and three steamship companies formally combined themselves in the Southern Railway & Steamship Association, bound themselves to a written agreement containing thirty articles, and selected Albert Fink, of the Louisville & Nashville, as their general commissioner.²⁴

Fink was a man of remarkably versatile genius. A native of Hesse-Darmstadt, he came to America when the democratic movement of 1848 failed in Germany. Beginning his American career as a civil engineer and bridge builder, he constructed a number of important railway bridges, but his

²² Hudson, *loc. cit. supra*, note 25, at 70-94, has an excellent account of the history of this organization

²³ *Id.* at 70.

²⁴ Account of formation in *id.* at 71-72. Articles of agreement in U.S. Bureau of Statistics, *First Annual Report of Internal Commerce of the United States*, Appendix, 16-19 (1876). The member railroads included the Western & Atlantic, the Central of Georgia, the Southwestern, the Savannah, Griffin & North Alabama, the Mobile & Girard, the Augusta & Savannah, the Eatonton Branch Railroad, the Georgia Railroad, the South Carolina Railroad, the Richmond & Danville, the Piedmont Railroad, the North Carolina Railroad, the Atlanta & Richmond Air Line, the Memphis & Charleston, the East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia, the Western of Alabama, the Montgomery & Eufaula, the Wilmington, Columbia & Augusta, the Charlotte, Columbia & Augusta, the Wilmington & Weldon, the South & North Alabama, and the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis.

talent in the operational field led to his appointment as a vice-president of the Louisville & Nashville and to his writing, in 1874, a report on the cost of transportation. This report established Fink as "the father of railway economics" in America. By 1875 he was ready to retire from business, but he deferred this step in order to accept the commissionership of the Southern Association. To this post he brought not only unusual intellectual power and great force as a leader, but also intense conviction that pooling was a meritorious and beneficial practice. Although he served as commissioner for only six months, he created for the southern roads the first successful large-scale railway pool in America.²⁵

Much of the work of the Association lies outside the limits of this paper (for instance, the division of freight between member roads), but one of its major functions was the control of competitive rates, especially to the East, and thus, indirectly, the creation of a regional rate structure. By the Association's first articles of agreement in 1875, the twenty-two member roads gave to the commissioner unequivocal power "to decide as arbitrator, . . . when they cannot be agreed upon between the members of the association . . . the competitive rates between rail and water lines . . . and the regulation of rates between the various centers of competition when they discriminate against certain localities . . . [and] the adoption of local rates protective of competitive rates." The Association also stated its purpose to "provide proper means to enforce effectively and promptly all agreements that may be entered into." As the articles were enlarged and renewed from year to year, a fully developed machinery for the making and enforcement of rates emerged. Just before the enactment of the Interstate Commerce Act this machinery consisted of an executive committee, with a subsidiary committee on rates. The rate committee was authorized, upon the unanimous agreement of its members, "to make all rates and classifications to and from all points East and West into Association territory." Failing such agreement, the executive committee was empowered to act, with rights of review and final and conclusive action by a board of arbitration. Members were specifically "forbidden to reduce the rates made by the Rate Committee," and if

²⁵ See the sketch of Fink in 6 *Dictionary of American Biography* 387-388 (1931), and Hudson, *loc. cit. supra*, note 21. Also see the numerous transcripts of testimony which Fink offered in explanation and defense of his ideas. These appear in U.S. Bureau of Statistics, *First Annual Report on Internal Commerce of the United States*, Appendix 1-48 (1876); *The Railroad Problem and Its Solution as Explained by Albert Fink before the Committee on Commerce of the U.S. House of Representatives* (1880); *Argument of Albert Fink before the Committee on Commerce of the U.S. House of Representatives* (1882); *Argument before the Committee on Commerce of the U. S. House of Representatives by Albert Fink* (1884); *Testimony of Albert Fink before the Select Committee on Interstate Commerce of the United States Senate* (1885); and *Report of the Senate Select Committee on Interstate Commerce*, Sen. Rep. No. 46, 49th Cong., 1st Sess. 89-126 (1886).

accused and found guilty by the board of arbitration of making such reductions, the members were subjected to heavy fines.²⁶ The reality of such penalties is indicated by the fact that one road was fined \$5,000 and others were tried by the arbitrators; the vigilance of enforcement is indicated by the fact that inspectors of the Association between October 1, 1886, and June 1, 1887, corrected weight or classification data on thousands of shipments of goods in order to prevent any indirect cutting of rates by means of underweighing or under-classifying shipments.²⁷ It was generally agreed that the Association effectively accomplished its purpose, which means that a regional authority had replaced independent action as a means of rate making, as early as 1880.

Not only did the operation of the Southern Association tend to bring rates under the control of a single regional authority; it also tended to maintain the higher regional level of rates which economic conditions had made necessary. Had southern railroads been operating in unrestricted competition, their rivalry for traffic would probably have resulted in a reduction of rates far below the point indicated by economic factors. But competition in rates was eliminated. A vice-president of the Louisville & Nashville, testifying on this matter in 1887, declared:

The Southern Railway and Steamship Association was one of the earliest organizations of that kind created in this country. Through it and through similar appliances we have been able to adjust our trouble, so that we have been comparatively free from wars. The Louisville and Nashville Company, although it traverses a vast territory and is considered a strong line, is not in a position to arbitrarily demand anything or to fix an arbitrary adjustment of rates to and from any point. . . . The lines directly interested in . . . traffic to and from . . . various centers come together and agree among themselves what the rates shall be, and if they cannot agree, the question is submitted to arbitration. This method . . . has enabled the lines of the South to avoid the rate wars so frequent between the trunk lines of the East and the railroads of the West.²⁸

Not for long, however, did the southern area remain in exclusive possession of the pool. After only six months of success in organizing the Southern

²⁶ First articles of agreement in U.S. Bureau of Statistics, *First Annual Report on Internal Commerce of the United States*, Appendix 16-19 (1876); articles for 1886-87 and 1887-88 in Hudson, *loc. cit. supra*, note 21, at 115-130.

²⁷ Hudson, *loc. cit. supra*, note 25, at 80-92.

²⁸ Testimony of E. B. Stahlman before ICC, May 27, 1887, in *Elkins Committee Digest*, 312. Cf. the testimony of William Z. Ripley, Jan. 7, 1901, that "the existence in a very large part of the southern states of what is practically a pool makes the freight rates into and out of those southern states considerably higher than in those parts of New England where competition still prevails." 9 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 289 (1901).

Association, Albert Fink was called to the building of an even greater combination — the Trunk Line Association, which included all the major roads from the Middle West to New York. This was easily the most important pool in the country, and by 1885 it had reached what is described as “a high degree of efficiency.”²⁹ Also by that date, a Western Freight Association had emerged from earlier pooling attempts in the West, and, so far as the voluntary action of railroads could accomplish it, the country had already been divided into its principal territorial groupings.

The enactment of the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887 and of the Sherman Act in 1890 presented a major challenge to the pools. The first of these measures specifically forbade the pooling of freights, and the second prohibited combinations in restraint of trade. Clearly, the railroads could not continue to apportion freight, and it was a question whether they could legally agree to equalize and maintain rates. In 1897 and 1898, in the *Trans-Missouri Freight Association* case and the *Joint Traffic Association* case, the Supreme Court held such rate-fixing practices to be illegal.³⁰

With both of the major functions of the pool thus outlawed, the regional associations faced a precarious future. But in fact the newly formed Interstate Commerce Commission had neither the power, the facilities, nor the desire to fix rates, and no one wanted to go back to the chaos and uncertainty of an arrangement in which each line maintained its own separate system of classification and rates. Moreover, the time had now arrived when the major part of the traffic was through traffic, on which no rate could be fixed without joint action by the roads involved. Consequently the rate associations were, in effect, permitted to reorganize and to continue on a conference basis, though without power to coerce their member roads. As early as 1889 the Interstate Commerce Commission officially stated that it intended to permit the carriers to work out all details of tariffs, and in 1890 it flatly declared that “railroads in the matter of rates, cannot be considered singly. In that respect, the railroad interest must be regarded as substantially a unit.”³¹ In 1889 the Commission held that, in determining the reasonableness of a rate, it was immaterial whether railroad companies had acted jointly or separately in deciding upon such a rate.³² Further encouragement to joint action had also been given by the ruling that if a railroad wrote to the Commission acknowledging the authority of an association to issue tariffs in its behalf the Commission would thereafter accept schedules filed

²⁹ 19 Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission 333 (1902); Hudson, *loc. cit. supra*, note 21, at 72.

³⁰ *United States v. Trans. Missouri Freight Association*, 166 U.S. 290 (1897); *United States v. Joint Traffic Association*, 171 U.S. 505 (1898).

³¹ *Third Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 235 (1889); *Fourth Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 28 (1890).

³² *New Orleans Cotton Exchange v. Cincinnati, N. O. & T. P. Ry.*, 2 I.C.C. 289 (1888).

by the association as if they had been filed by the member roads.³³ These rulings were cast into some shadow by the Supreme Court decisions of 1897-98, but they had indicated the attitude of the Commission, and, essentially, that attitude remained; nor was the Commission isolated in its view, for as early as 1899 the Attorney General issued a ruling in which he recognized the necessity of rate conferences, and sanctioned their continuance.³⁴

Thus the Commission indicated a complete readiness to recognize the joint action of the railroads themselves in the rate-making process. There was a question, however, whether it would prove equally tolerant of the regional divisions which had emerged from the formation of the early pools, or whether it would insist upon a greater degree of national uniformity. This question did not arise actively in connection with the actual tariffs, for it was conceded that they could not be reduced to uniformity, but it did arise very emphatically in connection with classification.

Classification of freights, as has been indicated, is distinct from rate making, in that it determines how the burden of rates shall be distributed among the various categories of freight but fixes no specific charges. In the period of independent action by separate roads each road had maintained its own classification, as well as its own rate schedule. Pools like the Southern Railway & Steamship Association had tended to collectivize both. But on the eve of the Interstate Commerce Act there were still fifty different classifications in effect in what is now official territory.³⁵ The imminence of the Act at that time persuaded the roads that a greater uniformity would be required in the future, and in February, 1887, the railroads of the Northeast appointed a committee to work out a uniform classification. This committee met, and in the space of eleven days, "with a zeal and pertinacity unprecedented," it devised a single system of classification, which was adopted.³⁶

Ironically, the promptness of this action created the false impression that the difficulties of classification could easily be solved, and that a nationally

³³ *In re Joint Tariffs*, *Seventh Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 131 (1893).

³⁴ The letter of the Attorney General to the I.C.C., December 30, 1899, replied to the question whether rate associations were subject to prosecution under the Sherman Act. To justify prosecution, he replied, "It must be shown that there is a 'contract, combination or conspiracy in restraint of trade. . . .' In the first place, there is no contract, combination or conspiracy shown. There is consultation by representative railroad men in committee respecting suggested changes in classification. There is subsequent independent action by railroad companies in the adoption of the new classification recommended by the committee. . . . It must be conceded that a common classification by railroad companies operating in the same territory is a desirable thing. . . ." *Thirteenth Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 16, 18 (1899).

³⁵ *Eleventh Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 62 (1897).

³⁶ The best account of the history of attempts to secure uniform classification is Barton, *Uniform Freight Classification and the Interstate Commerce Commission*, 18 *J. of Land and Pub. Util. Econ.* 312-322 (1942). Also see *Fifth Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 23, 24 (1891); 9 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 656-662 (1901); 19 *id.* at 391-397 (1902); *Class Rate Investigation*, 262 *I.C.C.* 447, 459-465 (1945).

uniform classification would soon be devised. Apparently Congress would have enacted a law requiring such a classification if it had not believed that voluntary action would soon achieve the objective. In 1891 and 1893 the Commission recommended that a uniform classification be imposed by law, and in the meanwhile the railroads had appointed a standing committee which appeared to be making progress.

Yet at this very time, when the highest hopes of nationalization prevailed, the process of regionalization was being completed. The western roads had adopted a joint western classification in 1883; the action of the eastern roads, as just described, had placed their classification on a regional basis in 1887; and the southern carriers in 1889 adopted the classification already in use by the Southern Railway & Steamship Association. This effectively concluded the blocking out of the separate classification territories which have remained to the present. Regional peculiarities of traffic prevented the railroads in different territories from agreeing upon uniform classification.³⁷ Many of their objections to uniformity seemed to have real merit, and the Commission slowly modified its insistence upon uniformity. A few minor steps were taken, such as the adoption, in 1911, of a nationally uniform system of description (as to packing, etc.) of the freight articles to be classified, and the agreement, in 1919, to publish all three classifications in parallel columns in a single book, instead of maintaining three separate publications.³⁸ But these advances left the separate territories essentially undisturbed, and by 1916 the Commission at last seemed to have accepted the territorial divisions as a permanent fixture, for it stated in its annual report that "the existing classifications have grown up in the light of the conditions prevailing in the different classification territories."³⁹

If, in the end, the Commission accepted territorialism in classification, it had accepted territorialism in rate making from the beginning. In the case of *Schumacher Milling Company v. Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railway*, in 1893, the Commission had declared that the fact that different rates and classifications were in force in different sections of the country would not, in itself, "warrant an extension of the lower rate and classification to the section where the higher rate and classification are applied."⁴⁰

With the Commission declaring that "rate-making and classification com-

³⁷ For statement of the regional objections to uniformity, see *Eleventh Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 64 (1897); 4 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 100, 217, 277 (1900); 9 *id.* at 633, 656 (1901).

³⁸ Barton, *loc. cit. supra*, note 36, at 319; testimony of J. A. Little, Nebraska State Railway Commissioner, in *Hearings before Subcommittee on Interstate Commerce on S. Res. 99, 76th Cong., 1st Sess.* 277 (1939).

³⁹ *Thirtieth Ann. Rep. I.C.C.* 13 (1916).

⁴⁰ 6 *I.C.C.* 61 (1893); also see *Western Newspaper Union v. Aberdeen & Rockfish R.R.*, 34 *I.C.C.* 326, 328 (1915).

mittees . . . perform a valuable and important service to the public as well as the railroads,"⁴¹ such organizations continued to play a vital part in initiating rates. Consequently they have continued to the present time, with various shifts in organization but with a great deal of basic continuity from the pools of the Eighties. By the beginning of the present century the Joint Traffic Association was the principal agency of joint action in the East. The western roads had been ordered under the Sherman Act to dissolve their Trans-Continental Freight Rate Committee, but within two months after the decision they had formed the Trans-Continental Freight Bureau, which continues to the present time. In the South, the Southern Railway & Steamship Association had succumbed in 1893 to the combined impact of the laws against pooling and the panic of 1893, and two groups, the Mississippi Valley and the Southeastern Freight associations, had taken its place. Later a third, the Associated Railways of Virginia and the Carolinas, further subdivided the South.⁴² But the essential continuity which projected itself through all these changes is shown by the fact that when the Southern Freight Association was formed in 1920, it included not only railway members, but also the same steamship lines which had constantly been affiliated with the railroads of the Southeast, ever since the original Southern Railway & Steamship Association. They still maintain this affiliation in 1947.⁴³

At the present, each of the three classification territories and the five rate territories has its corresponding classification and rate associations, and, in addition, certain subdivisions within the regions necessitate additional association groups. In official territory the Trunk Line Association, Central Freight Association, and New England Freight Association are all engaged in rate making, while the Official Classification Committee handles all questions of classification except those on intrastate traffic in Illinois. In the South, the Southern Freight Association and the Southern Classification Committee, which was established in 1899 and recognized on its present basis in 1917, are the principal agencies.⁴⁴

In terms of authority and of formal constitution, these associations are somewhat intangible. They are voluntary, unincorporated associations, which until the First World War were not required to file with the Inter-

⁴¹ *Harvard Co. v. Pennsylvania R.R.*, 4 I.C.C. 213, 223 (1890).

⁴² *In re Transcontinental Freight Bureau*, 77 I.C.C. 252 (1923); 19 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 336, 337 (1902).

⁴³ Testimony of Joseph G. Kerr, chairman, Southern Freight Association, in *Hearings before the Committee on Interstate Commerce on H. R. 2536*, 79th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1249 (1946).

⁴⁴ On the organizations at present, see testimony of James E. Kilday, *id.* at 823-833, 839-885; *Board of Investigation and Research, Report of Rate-making and Rate Publishing Procedures of Railroad, Motor, and Water Carriers*, H. R. Doc. No. 363, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. 7-54 (1943).

state Commerce Commission a statement of the nature of their organization,⁴⁵ and which sometimes refrained from drawing up formal articles of agreement. In a legal sense, they have no compulsory power, and their decisions are not binding upon any road which does not individually accept them, though members are pledged to delay for a fixed period before taking independent action. In an operational sense, however, the pressure to accede to the opinion of the majority is no doubt strong, not only because of a sense of community of interest, but also because through rates necessitate agreements, because a nonconforming member may be subjected to various reprisals, and because the majority is likely to appeal to the Interstate Commerce Commission to suspend the independently filed rate. If such an appeal is successful, the effect is to give legal force to the decision of the association.

If these associations are informal in constitution, they are by no means so in procedure. Indeed, they operate as quasi-judicial bodies, and when a change of classification or of tariff is proposed by carrier or shipper they place it on the docket for public hearings which are announced well ahead of time. Many routine proposals are disposed of by mail, but important changes are treated in a way which justifies the term "private judicature." Recent critics have assailed the vesting of this function in private hands, but no one questions that, by whomever administered, the system must operate with some degree of collaboration, for every change of rate at one point is likely to impinge upon scores of other rates from competitive points, and no change can wisely be made without permitting all interested shippers and carriers to express their views.⁴⁶

In terms of regional rate differentials, the vital significance of these territorial associations lay in the fact that the Interstate Commerce Commission tended to accept the work of each of them, thus conceding the validity of each region's operating separately, and embracing sectional disparities which it would scarcely have evolved for itself. Moreover, the Commission possessed and used the power to sanction differentials, thus giving legal authority to what was otherwise merely a business arrangement among railroads, or, more properly, an economic gap between separate business arrangements.

This paper has already noted the initial readiness of the Commission to accept territorialism in the fixing of tariffs, and its later acceptance of the same factor in classification, but for many years the cases which came before the Commission were so limited in scope that no formal recognition of terri-

⁴⁵ *Hearings before Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on S. 942*, 78th Cong., 1st Sess. 977 (1943).

⁴⁶ For account of the procedure of these organizations, see references in note 44.

territories or territorial distinctions was necessary. In 1920, however, when Congress adopted the Transportation Act of that year, it provided that recognition should be given to "such rate groups or territories as the Commission may from time to time designate."⁴⁷ This, for the first time, gave the Commission authority to recognize, and even to alter, the territories, and it led to a serious consideration of the whole matter in a case known as *Ex parte* 74, in 1920.⁴⁸ At this time, the Commission determined that it would recognize the existing territories. The wholeheartedness with which it did so is indicated by a dictum in a later case, that "one of the best tests of the reasonableness of a rate is by comparison with rates on like traffic in the same territory."⁴⁹ But the first important application of this new control occurred when the Commission instituted a sweeping review and revision of southern class rates. This *Southern Class Rate Investigation*, completed in 1925, was followed by several other territorial surveys.⁵⁰ In each of them, the tendency was to start with the existing rate structure, reared by the freight associations and classification committees, and to impose modifications upon these systems. In a qualified sense, the decisions of groups which could not legally impose their will upon their own members were now being enacted, by Interstate Commerce Commission endorsement, into administrative law.

The regional differentials of fifty years before were in pattern still somewhat the same, but in form they had evolved astonishingly. Having begun as the aggregate of individual actions by individual roads, they had first been collectivized by private, voluntary action on a territorial basis. Then, through acceptance and authorization by the Interstate Commerce Commission, they had achieved a status that entrenched them firmly behind the barriers of legal sanction.

IV. THE RATE STRUCTURE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION

The two preceding sections of this paper have traced the development of two factors, the importance of which, in the broad historical sense, is undisputed. Despite present controversies which rage around the questions of the effect of rate differentials upon the economy of the South, and of the degree to which rate associations are or are not monopolistic, all parties are agreed

⁴⁷ 41 Stat. 488 (1920).

⁴⁸ Increased Rates, 1920, 58 I.C.C. 220 (1920).

⁴⁹ Traffic Bureau of Sioux City Chamber of Commerce et al. v. Baltimore & Ohio R.R., 120 I.C.C. 7, 14 (1926).

⁵⁰ Southern Class Rate Investigation, 100 I.C.C. 513 (1925); Consolidated Southwestern Cases, 123 I.C.C. 203 (1927); Western Trunk-Line Class Rates, 164 I.C.C. 1 (1930); Eastern Class Rate Investigation, 164 I.C.C. 314 (1930); Western Trunk-Line Class Rates, 173 I.C.C. 637 (1931); Western-Southern Class Rates, 226 I.C.C. 497 (1938); Class Rate Investigation, 1939, 262 I.C.C. 447 (1945).

that the rate structure of the South evolved with different patterns and higher general levels than that of the eastern railroads, and that the formation of classification and rate committees along territorial lines contributed to the institutional fixing of these sectional patterns, especially since the Interstate Commerce Commission recognized the territories as units, conceded to the territorial associations a recognized function as the agents of roads in their geographical groups, and gave legal sanction by its rulings to territorial differentials.

These basic points of agreement are important to emphasize, for the reason that in 1945 the dispute over differentials entered a new and confusing phase. In that year the southern governors, including Ellis Arnall of Georgia, won a decision from the Interstate Commerce Commission ordering an adjustment of class rates in southern and official territories to bring the two structures nearer to a parity.⁵¹ The Commission's decision was appealed to the federal courts, and to many it seemed that a Supreme Court ruling sustaining the Commission was the only thing necessary to complete the triumph of the campaign against sectional discrimination. But Arnall had previously decided to extend the fight to an attack on the rate associations as monopolies and even on the Interstate Commerce Commission for countenancing them. Consequently, the State of Georgia, in 1945, filed a suit, now pending, against the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and others, in which the monopolistic intent of the rate associations in general, and of the Association of American Railroads in particular, was asserted.⁵² It would appear from the record that some of the objectives and actions of the AAR were, indeed, designed to exercise a control not altogether voluntary over the railroads of the country. But many people who were in sympathy with Arnall's fight for regional parity disagreed completely with his attack on the rate associations, which in their view performed an indispensable service. Consequently, a contest which had begun on the issue of sectional discrimination now focused upon the merits of rate associations. The new emphasis was particularly confusing in terms of the original issue, because there had previously been times when the heads of the southern rate associations were the most vigorous and effective foes of interterritorial discrimination, and they continued to fight for favorable rates for southern goods in northern markets. What then was the issue that separated them from the Georgia governor? It would seem to be that he was seeking to end discrimination by destroying the differential system and the institutions which had operated

⁵¹ Class Rate Investigation, 1939, 262 I.C.C. 447, 487 (1945).

⁵² Leave to file a complaint before the Supreme Court in the case of *State of Georgia v. Pennsylvania R.R.* was granted March 26, 1945. 324 U.S. 439 (1945). For views of Arnall on the I.C.C., see *Hearings before Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on H.R. 2536*, 79th Cong., 2nd Sess., 422-426 (1946).

it. They, in the belief that regional economic disparities necessitated rate-structure disparities also, were seeking to avoid the discriminatory effect of such disparities by making special competitive rates wherever the rigid application of differential rates would victimize the southern shipper. For the first twenty years of the present century they had been reasonably successful in making such rates, but this was always because they had the cooperation of carriers in official territory. Without such cooperation, the differential rates would apply. And the differential rates could be and have been employed by interests in official territory as a weapon of sectional economic advantage. Upon this point the spokesmen of the Southern Governors' Conference and the Southern Freight Association are agreed.

The complaint that the South, as an economic entity, was victimized by the freight rate structure probably extends back well into the nineteenth century. It can be documented as early as 1900. On June 14 of that year, a freight manager of an alkali company in Michigan, M. R. Bacon by name, testifying before the Industrial Commission, denounced what he called the "prohibitive freight rate to southern seaboard cities." Continuing, he exclaimed:

Take the South for illustration, with its great natural resources. It should be the home of the biggest manufacturing plants in the world. Let the railroads give that country reasonable freight rates, then watch the country prosper. Then see the diversified industries that will gather there. Then note the increased business of the railroads from every point of the compass to her growing manufacturing centers. I can see no effort or disposition on the part of the railroads to bring this about. It can only come from a reasonable and just classification of freight rates, by one traffic association, under the supervision of the Interstate Commerce Commission. . . .⁵³

Mr. Bacon did not enlarge upon the problem of territorial discrimination, but developments had already occurred which showed a tendency among the roads to adopt a conscious policy toward the economic growth of different areas. In fact, one of the first indications of such a policy is to be found as early as 1878. At that time the system of through connections was just emerging, and as it did so it automatically precipitated a rivalry between eastern seaboard and middle-western roads seeking a dominant position in supplying the southern market. Traditionally most of the manufactured goods which went South had been drawn from the seaboard, where the first American industry originated; and the staples needed by the South, such as packing-house products, grain products, and the like had been brought from the upper Mississippi and Ohio valleys by way of Cincinnati, Louisville, and

⁵³ 9 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 75 (1901).

St. Louis. This traditional division of functions was now jeopardized by the growth of industry in the West, and by the competitive enterprise of certain eastern interests in seeking to divert west-south traffic, bringing it east and thence south.

Here was a situation potentially likely to create a rate war, and the Southern Railway & Steamship Association was thoroughly committed to preventing all such competitive outbursts. As a result, it entered in 1879 into an agreement, partly formal and partly informal, to fix rates in such a way that eastern industry would have a monopoly of the delivery of manufactured goods, and western producers would have a monopoly of the delivery of staples.⁵⁴ Under this agreement, the rates were devised in such a way that manufactured goods moved from Cincinnati to Atlanta at 94 per cent of the rate for the same articles, New York to Atlanta, although on the basis of distance Cincinnati should have paid only 54 per cent as much. But on flour, where Cincinnati was to be encouraged, the rate was only 69 per cent of the New York rate.⁵⁵

In 1892 complainants brought this situation before the Interstate Commerce Commission; in 1894 the Commission ordered the defendant roads to correct their rates on a specified basis, in order to eliminate this discrimination.⁵⁶ The Supreme Court, however, refused to uphold this order, on the ground that the Interstate Commerce Commission had no power (at that time) to fix rates.⁵⁷ The rates, therefore, remained, and at the beginning of the present century the rate structure still reflected this arrangement.

⁵⁴ In *Freight Bureau v. Cincinnati, N. O. & T. P. Ry., et al.*, 6 I.C.C. 195, 216, 217 (1894), the I.C.C. reported that from records at the trial it appeared that this arrangement had been made at a convention of all the parties interested, and the "object was disclosed to be 'to protect to the Green Line Roads the business which is peculiar to the northwest, and to the eastern lines, the business peculiar to their territory.' . . ." The agreement then formed was renewed from year to year and in 1892 was expressed in formal terms as follows: "For the mutual protection of the various interests, . . . it is agreed that what are termed western lines shall protect the revenue derived from transportation by what are known as eastern lines, under the rates as fixed by this Association [the Southern Railway and Steamship Association], . . . and that eastern lines shall in like manner protect like revenue of western lines."

Sixteen years later, essentially the same case was brought before the Commission again, the Hepburn Act meanwhile having given the I.C.C. power to determine rates. In this case, *Receivers & Shippers Ass'n v. Cincinnati, N. O. & T. P. Ry.*, 18 I.C.C. 440 (1910), the I.C.C. reexamined the question whether an agreement had ever been made to protect the place of eastern manufacturers in the southern market, and concluded that no such agreement had been made, but that the agreement was solely to divide traffic, regardless of its character, along geographical lines. The Commission admitted that a protection of eastern manufacturers had been proposed, but found no evidence that it had been adopted. This finding is hard to accept after an examination of the evidence cited in the original finding.

⁵⁵ See 9 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 688 (1901), for these data and other testimony on the conspiracy.

⁵⁶ *Freight Bureau v. Cincinnati, N. O. & T. P. Ry.*, 6 I.C.C. 195 (1894).

⁵⁷ *Cincinnati, N. O. & T. P. Ry. v. I.C.C.*, 162 U.S. 195 (1896).

The territorial agreement of 1879 did not discriminate primarily against the South, though it did prevent the South from choosing freely between an eastern and a western source of supply. But it is a matter of leading significance that the railroads had already recognized that their action could shape the economic destiny of an area, and had demonstrated their power by an arrangement which for more than a quarter of a century controlled the economic relationships between the South and the West. Clearly this was a power of the most basic and vital kind, with a direct impact upon the welfare of every citizen.

In the whole problem of interterritorial relationships, however, there seemed to be one enduring factor of safety: that was the continuing desire of the various and numerous roads to secure traffic, even though at each other's expense. This largely offset the differential between the sections in rate levels, for it meant that the roads would usually make a special rate when one was necessary in order to move traffic between territories. It also offset the grouping of the roads into territorial blocs, for it meant that there was always a road in official territory which would join with the southern carriers in order to make a rate that would permit southern products to reach northern markets. Expressed in another way, this is to say that in practical terms a shipper does not care whether he confronts a rate level which is on the average higher than his competitor's; the average is an abstraction, and what concerns him is his capacity to reach a market at specific rates comparable to his competitor's rates. The action of individual carriers, both South and North, usually gave the southern shipper just such specific rates, and this seemed to provide a safety valve for the whole complex of differentials. Diversities of rate structure can have no applied results except when they impinge at the same point, upon one market or one shipper, and if the factor of difference is eliminated at all such competitive points, then the existence of the differential becomes more a matter of theoretical analysis than of concrete economic reality.

So long as the Sherman Act remained reasonably effective, and so long as numerous, independent railroads vied with one another for traffic, the operation of this safety factor prevented appreciable territorial discrimination. To illustrate specifically with a situation which later became famous in railway circles, there was a time when the Louisville & Nashville, sending products into the markets of the upper Middle West, could propose joint rates to a number of roads, all eager for traffic. At Cincinnati, it could work through the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton, the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis, the Chicago, St. Louis & Pittsburgh, or the Cincinnati, Indianapolis & Western. At Louisville, the Ohio & Mississippi, the Jeffersonville, Madison & Indianapolis, the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago, the

Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville, and the Evansville & Terre Haute were available. Here were nine independent roads in official territory, all with an important stake in south-north traffic, and all prepared to join in the making of favorable through rates.⁵⁸

So long as this situation prevailed, southern producers, including manufacturers, secured good competitive rates. As early as 1892 southeastern textile mills received rates to Chicago on a parity with those from Fall River to Chicago.⁵⁹ Similarly, southern producers of stoves and ranges for many years enjoyed rates which, although slightly higher, were low enough to enable them to compete with northern stove manufacturers in Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana markets.⁶⁰

All this, however, depended upon the continued independence of the connecting lines. These lines alone held off the potential handicap of higher rate structure and territorial grouping. And beginning about 1920, the connecting lines began to lose their independence.

Almost from the inception of railroading, the process of consolidation had been on the march. At first this extension took the form of the merging of short, separate, connecting lines, in order to create one through connection. Thus the Louisville & Nashville system was created by the consolidation of 125 separate lines, the Southern by the consolidation of 105 lines.⁶¹ In the interest of traffic movements on more than a local scale, this was undoubtedly a desirable trend; but in 1898 a new type of consolidation began to occur, in which the mergers that took place were between competing lines, rather than connecting lines; and as early as 1902 the Industrial Commission estimated that more than half of the railway mileage of the United States was under the control of only six financial interests.⁶² After this rapid development, consolidation tended to mark time during the period of Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, who were all, of course, hostile to the growth of monopoly. Beginning with the First World War, however, the emphasis changed, and under the Transportation Act of 1920 pooling, consolidation, and other collectivist practices received explicit sanc-

⁵⁸ Testimony of E. R. Oliver, Feb. 29, 1932, in Docket No. 12,964, Supplement, 2120-2122, Interstate Commerce Commission. I am indebted to Mr. Frank L. Barton for calling my attention to the valuable data in this docket.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 2120.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 2128.

⁶¹ Fairfax Harrison, *A History of the Legal Development of the Railroad System of the Southern Railway Company* (1901); testimony of A. J. Ribe in *Hearings before Senate Subcommittee on Interstate Commerce on S. Res. 99, 76th Cong., 1st Sess.* 380 (1939).

⁶² 19 *Rep. U.S. Industrial Commission* 307-308 (1902). The railroads of the South were, of course, undergoing a similar consolidation, and by 1925 the I.C.C. stated that there were but four major systems — the Southern Railway System, the Louisville & Nashville-Atlantic Coast Line System, the Seaboard Air Line System, and the Illinois Central System — which dominated the railway network of the South. 100 I.C.C. 513, 525 n. (1925).

tion. As a result, the small roads, including those connecting lines which had joined with southern railroads in carrying southern goods north from the Potomac or the Ohio, began to fall under the control of the great trunk lines, such as the Erie, the Pennsylvania, the New York Central, and the Baltimore & Ohio. Thus, by 1929, of the nine independent connecting lines which had once linked the Louisville & Nashville with northern markets, one had passed into the hands of the New York Central, one to the Chesapeake & Ohio, two to the Pennsylvania, and three to the Baltimore & Ohio. An eighth had been absorbed by the ninth, the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville, or Monon, as it is usually called. This ninth, as a subsidiary of the Southern and the Louisville & Nashville, alone remained free from the domination of the trunk-line roads.⁶³

The strategic importance of the Monon now illustrated the precarious nature of southern access to northern markets, for repeatedly it was this road alone which prevented gross territorial discrimination by other official roads. The trunk lines which had taken over the eight connecting lines were concerned primarily with long hauls of east-west traffic in their own area, rather than short hauls north from the Ohio. Consequently, when southern roads in 1921 sought to secure a market for sugar imported at Savannah by proposing to the Central Freight Association the establishment of an interterritorial rate competitive with the official territory rate, the northern group rejected the proposal. The Monon thereupon announced that it would independently agree to a joint rate with southern lines, and when it did so the other roads in official territory also complied, since, if the traffic was going to move at all, they desired a share. But they had sought to stop it completely. Similarly in 1928, official lines in the Illinois Freight Association refused a proposal by southern lines to establish competitive rates for paper from Alabama, and again the independent action of the Monon caused them to make such rates against their expressed will.⁶⁴

In other cases the official lines were successful in withholding their compliance, and at times they were able to use the fourth section of the Interstate Commerce Act as a weapon. This section, which prohibits lower rates for a long haul than for a shorter haul included within the long haul, would, unless the Commission granted relief, prevent a competitive rate to a point in official territory if that rate were lower than the rate to an intervening point in southern territory. In other words, it would prevent southern carriers from maintaining a higher rate level in the South while by-passing that level when they desired to compete in northern markets, and in this sense it placed the southern differential as a weapon in the hands of northern rail-

⁶³ Testimony of E. R. Oliver, I.C.C. Docket No. 12,964, Supplement, 2120-2122.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 2140.

roads bent on monopolizing northern markets for their own shippers. To illustrate: carriers in official territory had long joined southern carriers in special joint rates for cotton piece goods; but when an order was issued, September 9, 1931, for a review of these rates, the leading official territory lines at once "declined longer to participate in competitive rates on this traffic from points in Southern territory to destinations in Official territory," and they proceeded to file a petition seeking permission to suspend such competitive rates.⁶⁵ Somewhat the same thing happened in connection with iron and steel articles, so that Mr. E. R. Oliver, vice-president in charge of traffic of the Southern Railway, declared, "the principal Official territory lines . . . have seized upon the opportunity [of the fourth section] to wipe out competitive rate adjustments of long standing applying on manufactured products from Southern territory to Official territory."⁶⁶

In 1932, the Baltimore & Ohio took steps which convinced the southern roads that it was about to attempt to seize control of the Monon under certain provisions of the Transportation Act of 1920. This stimulated a vigorous response, and in hearings before the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1932 spokesmen of the southern roads expressed themselves with unusual candor about the policy of official lines. Joseph G. Kerr, of the Louisville & Nashville, was questioned by an examiner who asked:

I understand you to say that it had been for a number of years past the fixed policy of these four railroads [Erie, Pennsylvania, New York Central, and Baltimore & Ohio] . . . who are seeking the control of all the railroads north of the Ohio and Potomac rivers . . . to prevent as far as they could the movement of traffic from the South generally into the Northern territory on competitive terms. Is that correct?

To this, Mr. Kerr responded: "On competitive terms wherein it in any way affects the east and west traffic."⁶⁷ E. R. Oliver, vice-president of the Southern Railway, was even more forthright in his statement. He declared:

The Southern carriers have always followed the policy of maintaining competitive rates from the South into Official territory in line with

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 2137-2138.

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 2124-2126. A number of cases which illustrate the attempts of northern roads to cancel competitive rates or to prevent their establishment are *Auburn Automobile Co. v. Pennsylvania R.R.*, 151 I.C.C. 120 (1929); *Hosiery from Southern Points*, 156 I.C.C. 117 (1929); *Export and Import Rates*, 169 I.C.C. 13 (1930); *Stoves, Ranges, Boilers, etc.*, 169 I.C.C. 169 (1930); and *Iron and Steel Products from the South*, 176 I.C.C. 345, 352 (1931). In the last of these cases the Commission declared, "The evidence upon this record leaves no doubt that the southern manufacturers would have serious, if not insurmountable difficulty in competing with the northern manufacturers in the destination territory if the proposed rates became effective. Since the demand in southern territory for the articles manufactured by them is much less than they can supply, it must be that if their market in the north were thus seriously restricted, the very existence of some of these southern manufacturers would be threatened."

⁶⁷ I.C.C. Docket No. 12,964, Supplement, 2202.

the rate level prevailing within Official territory in order that manufacturers in Southern territory can reach the large markets in the North and East in competition with manufacturers located North of the Ohio and Potomac rivers. The Southern carriers were able, over a long period of years to carry out this policy until the end of Federal control on February 29, 1920. . . .

The absorption of the [independent] lines in this Northern territory by the larger systems whose chief interest is in traffic moving eastbound and westbound has changed the whole complexion of this situation so that the north-and-south lines thus controlled no longer agree to establish or continue rates on Southern manufactures into this Northern territory in competition with rates enjoyed by manufacturers in Official territory directly served by the east-and-west lines.

The new policy of these connections is to build a rate wall at the Ohio and Potomac rivers which will prevent or greatly curtail the movement of Southern products into Official territory.⁶⁸

Although this situation was illustrated especially well by the developments at the Ohio River crossings, it was by no means confined to that area. The principal connections of the southern lines at the Virginia gateways were also, in a competitive sense, blocked, and the Baltimore & Ohio and the Pennsylvania opposed "every effort of the Southern lines to establish or maintain rates from the South into Official territory in line with the rates within Official territory."⁶⁹ From the standpoint of traffic movement, this did not seriously obstruct northbound shipments, for the southern roads could and did rely heavily on water-borne connections north of Norfolk. But in this utilization of steamships in the East, as in their utilization of the Monon line in the West, the southern roads were placed in the insecure position of relying upon a limited group of somewhat exceptional connections, rather than upon a broad basis of equitable interterritorial rates.

It was at about this time that the Interstate Commerce Commission announced a conclusion which might well have astonished those who looked upon the Commission as the effective guardian of justice in the American rate system. In the case of *Alabama v. New York Central Railroad* it declared:

The contention that the Northern carriers, which participate in the interterritorial rates, do not control the rates within the North appears to be contrary to the facts. . . . We are persuaded that the Northern carriers as a group actually do effectively control the rates within the North and also the northbound interterritorial rates except to points on and west of the Monon line.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 2119-2124.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 2150.

⁷⁰ 235 I.C.C. 255, 329 (1939).

At the end of the decade of the Twenties, therefore, the freedom of southern producers to sell in northern markets was threatened as never before. The disappearance of independent north-south connecting lines removed the possibility of arranging special joint rates into official territory. This forced the South to face, for the first time, the intersectional consequences of the differential in rate levels and the demarcation of territories. Northern railroads freely utilized these factors to monopolize their own markets for their own shippers, and the Interstate Commerce Commission admitted that these northern roads were in full control of the situation.

It was already a grave state of affairs, but the decade of the Thirties brought a number of new developments which increased its gravity. First of all, this era brought the Great Depression, which immeasurably sharpened the incentive of all business enterprises to seize upon any economic advantage, any means of procuring or of retaining business. This meant that northern carriers and shippers would employ to the fullest any sectional advantage which inhered in the rate structure. Second, it brought to a climax a drive by the South to capture a greater part of the nation's industry. In doing this, southern promoters, in some cases with the cooperation of their state governments, publicized fully every advantage which the South could offer. Southern wages were low because living costs were low and labor was not unionized.⁷¹ Overhead costs of operation were lighter because taxes were not as heavy as in metropolitan areas and, at times, exemption from taxes was granted for a term of years. Climate advantages permitted more continuous operation in some types of industry than was possible in the rigors of a northern winter. In short, almost every advantage seemed to lie with the South, and the migration of industry from New England reached proportions that have cast a lasting blight over some of the oldest industrial areas in the country. It was not surprising, therefore, that northern industry began to fight back. To offset the wage differential, many an eastern industrialist who would never have done so otherwise gave his support to a uniform national wages and hours law, and the enactment of that measure assumed a distinctively sectional character.⁷² One of the few indubitable advantages which the North still possessed was the favorable rate structure, and the utilization of every such advantage became increasingly imperative.

A third factor which contributed to bringing the rate question into a new phase was the virtual suspension of the antitrust laws during the first years

⁷¹ The specific relationship of the intersectional wage differential and the intersectional rate differential has been recognized by Governor Arnall. See his testimony in *Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on H. R. 2536*, 79th Cong., 1st Sess. 417-418 (1945).

⁷² Speaking of the Fair Labor Standards Act, Carl B. Swisher declares, "It was believed that the proposed statute would curtail the incipient industrial development in the South and that it was intended to do so." *American Constitutional Development* 910 (1943).

of the New Deal. Collective action in industry had made great strides during the Twenties, but the climax came with the adoption of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933, with its avowed purpose to promote "the organization of industry for the purpose of cooperative action among trade groups" and its suspension of the antitrust laws in so far as they conflicted with compliance with the Act.⁷³ President Roosevelt had specifically indicated at Salt Lake City on September 17, 1932, "I believe the policy of enforced competition between railroads can be carried to unnecessary lengths. . . . We have . . . frequently required them to compete unreasonably with each other." The adoption of the Emergency Railroad Transportation Act of 1933⁷⁴ seemed to lend further sanction to the idea of group action, and this impression was confirmed when the Federal Coordinator of Transportation, appointed under the Act, urged the roads to form "a more perfect union."⁷⁵

Accordingly, the railroads began to strengthen the agencies in which they were associated. The Pennsylvania Railroad acted as the spearhead of this movement, and at a meeting, now famous, at the Metropolitan Club on November 14, 1933, a group of the nation's leading capitalists, industrialists, and railroad executives planned to reorganize the innocuous old American Railway Association into a new and potent successor.⁷⁶ This successor emerged about a year later as the Association of American Railroads.

Whatever the objectives of the new association were, they did not relate primarily to interregional rate controls. Eastern railroads had more to fear from pipe-line competition, or from motor-truck competition, than from their southern associates. Consequently, the major part of their activity was directed to other matters. But though the association was careful, in deference to the antitrust laws, to avoid abridging the legal right of its members to independent action, it was certainly somewhat monopolistic in spirit. It sought to prevent disputes between carriers from going to the Interstate Commerce Commission, and to this end it set up an elaborate mechanism for arbitration;⁷⁷ it adopted a resolution that "no further request for suspension of tariff publications of one group of lines will be filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission by other lines, unless there has first been

⁷³ 48 Stat. 195, 198 (1933).

⁷⁴ 48 Stat. 211 (1933).

⁷⁵ Testimony of R. V. Fletcher, Association of American Railroads, in *Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on H. R. 2536*, 79th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1376 (1946).

⁷⁶ For transcript of proceedings of this meeting, see the exhibits in the Plaintiff's Trial Brief, Part II, 18-21, in the case of *Georgia v. Pennsylvania R.R.*, in the Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1945, No. 11 Original.

⁷⁷ See Articles of Organization of this association in *Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on H. R. 2536*, 79th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1548-1555 (1946).

a conference of representatives of both parties with the officers of this organization."⁷⁸ When one of the member lines showed a tendency to disregard the policies of the association, J. J. Pelley, president of the association, reminded the offender of the possibility of "extensive retaliatory developments."⁷⁹ All along the line there was a tendency to centralize action in a limited number of hands: in southern territory, for instance, a new Traffic Executive Association for southern territory was established, with authority to handle matters of concern to all southern roads, and the Southern Freight Association acknowledged this authority; but only eleven members belonged to the Executive Association, and thus small southern lines were faced with the dilemma of accepting this authority in which they were not represented, or of withdrawing from the Southern Freight Association, which had been made the instrument of their submission.⁸⁰

In terms of interterritorial relationships, the principal threat to southern shippers and carriers lay in the development of a policy which would avoid carrying questions to the Interstate Commerce Commission, and in the creation of an array of interterritorial committees in which the representation was arranged in such a way as to assure the dominating influence of official roads. Of this there were two outstanding examples. The first was the Joint Conference of Central Freight Association, Trunk Line Association, and New England Freight Association. The function of this conference of the three sub-regional groups within official territory was to consider proposals for rates, lower than regular class rates, from other territories. This meant, in effect, that if a southern carrier wished to arrange a special rate it would first have to submit the matter to the Southern Freight Association, and at the same time to the three official territory associations, any one of which could reject it, even though the rate under consideration did not extend to the sub-region which exercised the right of rejection. Upon an appeal, the matter would go to the Joint Conference of eastern territory lines, where a three-fourths majority within each of at least two of the three eastern associations would be required to sustain the appeal. Under this plan, a rate from the South might easily be blocked by representatives of a sub-region in the East to which the rate was not applicable.⁸¹ Legally, of course, individual roads still retained a right of independent action in agreeing upon and filing joint rates, but clearly there was heavy pressure to prevent this.

The second of the important interterritorial groups was the Joint Confer-

⁷⁸ Resolution, May 5, 1935, in Plaintiff's Trial Brief, cited *supra*, note 76, at 70-71.

⁷⁹ Letter of Pelley, April 16, 1936, *id.* at 58-59.

⁸⁰ The plan of organization of the Traffic Executive Association and the reorganized articles of the Southern Freight Association, recognizing the authority of the new body, are in *id.* at 145-164.

⁸¹ Rules of procedure of these conferences, *id.* at 120-122.

ence of Contact Committees, constituted of representatives of the seven principal rate-making associations, of which one is southern, one southwestern, one western, and four are within official territory. This, of course, conferred a potential majority upon official territory over all other territories combined, and it has been asserted that this advantage was fully utilized by the official representatives' practice of voting as a unit.⁸²

Railway representatives, denying the significance of these arrangements, have made vigorous assertion of the frequency with which the individual roads continue to file independent rates,⁸³ but it does not appear that many of these are joint rates crossing the interterritorial barrier.

Nor does it appear that, so long as the great trunk lines dominate official territory, the situation would be altered appreciably by a dissolution of the new interterritorial agencies, for the full effect of the sectional barrier had made itself felt before these agencies were constituted. In this sense, the State of Georgia's case does not reach to the heart of the problem, though it does deal with an important aspect.

It is hardly to be supposed that the Supreme Court's rulings, either in its review of the *Class Rate Decision* of 1945⁸⁴ or in its disposition of the case of *Georgia v. Pennsylvania Railroad*, will provide a final solution for a problem of such complexity and long standing as that of regional rate differentials. Arrangements which have stood since the heyday of the cotton economy and since the Ohio and Mississippi were unbridged are not to be supplanted easily or at once. But, however these cases may be decided, and however the decisions may be applied in establishing a new system, the concurrent importance of the two cases at the present time illustrates the continuing parallelism of the two factors which alone have operated or may operate to prevent differential rates from being discriminatory rates. One of

⁸² Rules of procedure of this conference, *id.* at 171-174. See also, at 174, memorandum of S. B. Mitchell of Southern Freight Association, as follows: "As you know, the Official Classification lines, i.e., C.F.A., E.T.U., N.E., and I.F.A. vote separately in the Joint Conference of Contact Committees and their votes are nearly always a unit. Having four votes, necessarily they have an advantage and can often control the action of the Joint Conference of Contact Committees. Our only hope in getting a fair deal with our interterritorial proposals that go to the Joint Conference for disposition is through the Illinois Freight Committee. Until the recent past that Committee required only one negative vote to defeat a proposition, therefore, to illustrate, a proposal from the South to Chicago, while favored by a majority of the Illinois lines, their vote would be in the negative if one east to west line voted in the negative."

⁸³ Joseph G. Kerr has stated that the members of the Southern Freight Association filed 19,000 rates directly with the I.C.C. and without approval by the Freight Association in the years 1933 and 1934. He concedes that this was an abnormal time, but also states that in the three years ending in 1943, the Southern Railway filed 152 separate actions, and the Seaboard filed 78. *Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on H. R. 2536*, 79th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1290-1293 (1946).

⁸⁴ 262 I.C.C. 447 (1935). [This decision of the Commission was upheld by the Supreme Court on May 12, 1947.]

these factors is competition among carriers, which has maintained the access of southern goods to northern markets by special rates during a long period when the Interstate Commerce Commission lacked the power or the impulse to modify regional differentials. The other is public authority, represented by the Commission, which was until very recently content to play a more passive role than most Americans realized in accepting the rate patterns as they had evolved, or as the carriers had fixed them. Because of the first of these factors the South has never been subjected to such an economic blockade as some publicists have implied; though the trunk lines have at times sought to utilize the differentials as a tariff wall, southern goods have escaped decisive or permanent exclusion. But in the absence of small, independent carriers, the basis for competition narrows increasingly. As it does so, the responsibility of public authority increases. Readiness to meet the responsibility has been indicated by the *Class Rate Decision* of 1945. By any measure, this decision would seem to mark a turning point in the history of regional differentials, for whether the Commission attempts a solution by the gradual elimination of all territories, or by the imposition of equitable rates between them, it appears that the transition has been made from a system of differentials tempered by competition to one of differentials tempered or eliminated by active public regulation.

3

THE COMING OF THE CORPORATE AGE

In October, 1901, shortly after J. P. Morgan announced the organization of the United States Steel Corporation with a capitalization of over a billion dollars, the *Boston Herald* commented: "If a limited financial group shall come to represent the capitalistic end of industry, the perils of socialism, even if brought about by some rude, because forcible, taking of the instruments of industry, may be looked upon by even intelligent people as possibly the lesser of two evils." It is a measure of the agitation evoked by the great business consolidations around the turn of the century that such a statement could come from so eminent a representative of conservative Eastern sentiment.

One reason for the agitation was the suddenness of the consolidation movement. Between 1879 and 1896 there had been only a dozen important combinations of mining or manufacturing companies: their aggregate capitalization did not amount to \$1 billion. But in the six years between 1897 and 1902, there were 2,722 combinations of manufacturing and mining companies with an aggregate capitalization of almost \$6.5 billion; in 1899 alone, there were 1,208 mergers totaling \$2.3 billion. At no other time in American history has business enterprise gone in for consolidation on anything like that scale. In the fifteen-year period between 1906 and 1920, for example, the number of industrial mergers exceeded 100 only five times. A new record of 1,245 mergers was set in 1929, but the average of annual consolidations since 1905 has been only about 250. In short, it is not astonishing that in 1901 even conservatives had begun to fear that a small number of dubiously motivated businessmen might be assuming control of the economy.

A second reason for concern was the sudden and complete ascendancy of the corporate form of business organization, and especially the ominous possibilities for control that holding companies (such as U. S. Steel) possessed. Although the corporate form of business organization may seem always to have been with us, before the 1880's few industrial companies were "publicly owned" (i.e., raised capital by selling stock) and some of the largest companies in the country (e.g., Marshall Field, F. W. Woolworth, A. & P.) were partnerships or family owned. The corporate form had usually been confined to banks or public-service enterprises (railroads, water companies, etc.). [There is a comprehensive study of the subject in E. M. Dodd, *American Business Corporations Until 1860* (1954). But for briefer treatment,

see Oscar and M. F. Handlin, "Origins of the American Business Corporation," *Journal of Economic History*, V (May 1945); and Dodd's "The Evolution of Limited Liability in American Industry: Massachusetts," *Harvard Law Review*, LXI (Sept. 1948).] The capital demands of large-scale marketing, processing, and manufacturing enterprise, however, made public sale of ownership shares inevitable, while the holding-company technique for evading the antitrust laws and the promotional profits in the creation and sale of securities also helped popularize the incorporation idea for the non-utilities. Few industrial securities found a market on the stock exchanges before 1896 and John Moody did not begin his renowned manual for industrials until 1900, but by 1904 industrials accounted for almost 40 per cent of the capital in the country. [See T. R. Navin and M. V. Sears, "The Rise of a Market for Industrial Securities, 1887-1902," *Business History Review*, XXIX (June 1955).]

Corporate organization provided the flexibility in finance and direction needed for large-scale business enterprise. But it also upset the traditional relationships of individuals to property. [For a short, sharp essay on this subject, see D. Bell, "The Breakup of Family Capitalism," in *The End of Ideology* (1960).] It placed a sturdy wall between ownership and control, and permitted motives other than profit to intrude into the conduct of business enterprise. Some hoped American business might thus be lifted from the meanness of small-time, competitive profit grabbing. "The real news about business," wrote Walter Lippmann in 1914, "is that it is being administered by men who are not profiteers. The managers are on salary, divorced from ownership and from bargaining. . . . Their day's work is not measured in profit." [*Drift and Mastery* (1961 paperback reprint), 43.] But more often the separation seemed only to permit business leaders to indulge in reckless empire-building and stock manipulations for their own amusement and personal profit at the expense of the enterprises they controlled. [L. D. Brandeis' *Other People's Money and How the Bankers Use It* (1914) is the classic statement of this view.]

For a country that was still oriented to agriculture and small-town life, the development of "big business" and the ascendancy of the corporate form of business enterprise thus posed a dual threat. It is not hard to understand the references to the conspiratorial "they" which punctuate the speeches and editorials of the day. "They" invaded the natural markets of local retailers and processors. "They" rigged the price of kerosene and condiments, jute bags and implements, bathtubs and beefsteaks. "They" controlled property they did not own from offices thousands of miles away. "They" made money without working.

Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., tells the "other side" of the story in the article that follows. In explaining the growth of "big business" Chandler emphasizes the demand for large-scale organization created by the growth of large urban markets. The natural growth of big businesses soon inspired defensive combinations and vertical integration to protect competitive positions and sources of supply as well as to reduce

costs. In Chandler's account, promotional profits, stock manipulation, and even price fixing play a subordinate role in the story of the consolidation movement.

Mr. Chandler is Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University; his book *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the Industrial Enterprise* (1962) won the Newcomen Award in Business History.

The Beginnings of "Big Business" in American Industry

ALFRED D. CHANDLER, JR.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND ANALYSIS

The historian, by the very nature of his task, must be concerned with change. What made for change? Why did it come when it did, and in the way it did? These are characteristically historians' questions. For the student of American business history, these basic questions can be put a little more precisely. What in the American past has given businessmen the opportunity or created the need for them to change what they were doing or the way they were doing it? In other words, what stimulated them to develop new products, new markets, new sources of raw materials, new ways of procuring, processing, or marketing the goods they handled? What encouraged them to find new methods of financing, new ways of managing or organizing their businesses? What turned them to altering their relations with their working force, their customers and competitors, and with the larger American public?

The question of what constitutes the dynamic factors in American business history, dynamic in the sense of stimulating change and innovation, can be more clearly defined if the country's land, natural resources, and cultural patterns are taken as given. Land and resources were the raw materials with which the businessmen had to work, and the cultural attitudes and values helped set the legal and ethical rules of the game they had to play. Within this cultural and geographic environment a number of historical developments appear to have stimulated change. These provide a framework around which historical data can be compiled and analyzed.

Reprinted from the *Business History Review* XXXIII (Spring 1959) pp. 1-31, by permission. This study was supported by the Sloan Research Fund of The School of Industrial Management and the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The following major dynamic forces are visible in the American business economy since 1815: the western expansion of population; the construction and initial operation of the national railroad network; the development of a national and increasingly urban market; the application of two new sources of power: the internal combustion engine and electricity, to industry and transportation; and the systematic application of the natural and physical sciences, particularly chemistry and physics, to industry through the institutionalizing of research and development activities.

The first, the westward expansion, appears to have provided the primary impetus, except possibly in New England, to business innovation in the years from 1815 to about 1850; the building of the railroads appears to have been the major factor from the 1850's to the late 1870's; the growth of the national and urban market from the 1880's until a little after 1900; the coming of electricity and the internal combustion engine from the early 1900's to the 1920's; and, finally, the growth of systematic and institutionalized research and development since the 1920's.

These five factors are essentially aspects of fundamental population changes and technological advances. There were, of course, other factors that encouraged business innovation and change. The coming of the new machines and mechanical devices may have been a more important stimulant to innovation in New England than the growth of her markets and sources of supply in the expanding South and West. Wars usually precipitated change. The business cycle, flow of capital, government policy and legislation all played a significant part in business innovation. But such political and financial developments appear to have intensified or delayed the more basic changes encouraged initially by fundamental population shifts and technological achievements.

The purpose of making such a list is, however, not to argue that one development was more dynamic than the other. Nor are these five factors to be considered as "causes" for change; nor are they "theses" to be argued as representing reality, nor "theories" to provide an over-all explanation of change or possibly of predicting change. They are, rather, a framework on which historical information can be tied and inter-related. They provide a consistent basis upon which meaningful questions can be asked of the data.

This framework and these questions are, it should be emphasized, concerned only with fundamental changes and innovation in the business economy. They do not deal with the day-to-day activities to which businessmen must devote nearly all of their time. They are not concerned with the continuous adaptation to the constant variations of the market, sources of supply, availability of capital, and technological developments. Nor do they consider why some businesses and businessmen respond quickly and crea-

tively to the basic population and technological changes and others did not. But an understanding of the continuous response and adjustment would seem to require first an awareness of the meaning of the more fundamental or "discontinuous" changes.

Since historical compilation and analysis must be selective, it is impossible to undertake any historical study without some criteria either implicit or explicit for selection. Further study and analysis, by indicating the defects of this approach and framework, will suggest more satisfactory ones. In the process, an analysis and interpretation of change in the American business past should come a little nearer to reality.

The purpose of this article then is, by using the framework of basic, dynamic forces, to look a little more closely at the years that witnessed the beginnings of big business in American industry. What types of changes came during these years in the ways of marketing, purchasing, processing, and in the forms of business organization? Why did these changes come when they did in the way they did? Was the growth of the national market a major prerequisite for such innovation and change? If not, what then was? How did these innovations relate to the growth of the railroad network or the coming of electricity and the internal combustion engine?

In addition to secondary works on this period, the data used in seeking answers to these questions have been annual and other corporation reports, government documents, articles in periodicals, histories, and biographies concerning the 50 largest industrial companies in the country in 1909. Nearly all these companies, listed in Table I, had their beginnings in the last years of the nineteenth century.

MAJOR CHANGES IN AMERICAN INDUSTRY AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Between the depression of the 1870's and the beginning of the twentieth century, American industry underwent a significant transformation. In the 1870's, the major industries serviced an agrarian economy. Except for a few companies equipping the rapidly expanding railroad network, the leading industrial firms processed agricultural products and provided farmers with food and clothing. These firms tended to be small, and bought their raw materials and sold their finished goods locally. Where they manufactured for a market more than a few miles away from the factory, they bought and sold through commissioned agents who handled the business of several other similar firms.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, many more companies were making producers' goods, to be used in industry rather than on the farm or

by the ultimate consumer. Most of the major industries had become dominated by a few large enterprises. These great industrial corporations no longer purchased and sold through agents, but had their own nation-wide buying and marketing organizations. Many, primarily those in the extractive industries, had come to control their own raw materials. In other words, the business economy had become industrial. Major industries were dominated by a few firms that had become great, vertically integrated, centralized enterprises.

In the terms of the economist and sociologist a significant sector of American industry had become bureaucratic, in the sense that business decisions were made within large hierarchical structures. Externally, oligopoly was prevalent, the decision-makers being as much concerned with the actions of the few other large firms in the industry as with over-all changes in markets, sources of supplies, and technological improvements.

These basic changes came only after the railroads had created a national market. The railroad network, in turn, had grown swiftly primarily because of the near desperate requirements for efficient transportation created by the movement of population westward after 1815.¹ Except for the Atlantic seaboard between Boston and Washington, the construction of the American railroads was stimulated almost wholly by the demand for better transportation to move crops, to bring farmers supplies, and to open up new territories to commercial agriculture.

By greatly expanding the scope of the agrarian economy, the railroads quickened the growth of the older commercial centers, such as New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and St. Louis, and helped create new cities like Chicago, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Kansas City, Dallas, and the Twin Cities. This rapid urban expansion intensified the demand for the products of the older consumer goods industries — particularly those which processed the crops of the farmer and planter into food, stimulants, and clothing.

At the same time, railroad construction developed the first large market in this country for producers' goods. Except for the making of relatively few textile machines, steamboat engines, and ordnance, the iron and nonferrous manufacturers had before 1850 concentrated on providing metals and simple tools for merchants and farmers. Even textile machinery was usually made by the cloth manufacturers themselves. However, by 1860, only a decade after beginning America's first major railroad construction boom, railroad companies had already replaced the blacksmiths as the primary market for

¹ The factors stimulating the growth of the American railroad network and the impact of the earlier construction and operation of this network on the American business economy and business institutions is suggested in Chandler, *Henry Varnum Poor — Business Editor, Analyst, and Reformer* (Cambridge, 1956), especially chaps. 4, 6–9.

iron products, and had become far and away the most important market for the heavy engineering industries. By then, too, the locomotive was competing with the Connecticut brass industry as a major consumer of copper. More than this, the railroads, with their huge capital outlay, their fixed operating costs, the large size of their labor and management force, and the technical complexity of their operations, pioneered in the new ways of oligopolistic competition and large-scale, professionalized, bureaucratized management.

The new nation-wide market created by the construction of the railroad network became an increasingly urban one. From 1850 on, if not before, urban areas were growing more rapidly than rural ones. In the four decades from 1840 to 1880 the proportion of urban population rose from 11 per cent to 28 per cent of the total population, or about 4 per cent a decade. In the two decades from 1880 to 1900 it grew from 28 per cent to 40 per cent or an increase of 6 per cent a decade. Was this new urban and national market, then, the primary stimulant for business innovation and change, and for the coming of big business to American industry?

CHANGES IN THE CONSUMERS' GOODS INDUSTRIES

The industries first to become dominated by great business enterprises were those making consumer goods, the majority of which were processed from products grown on the farm and sold in the urban markets. Consolidation and centralization in the consumers' goods industries were well under way by 1893. The unit that appeared was one which integrated within a single business organization the major economic processes: production or purchasing of raw materials, manufacturing, distribution, and finance.

Such vertically integrated organizations came in two quite different ways. Where the product tended to be somewhat new in kind and especially fitted for the urban market, its makers created their businesses by first building large marketing and then purchasing organizations. This technique appears to have been true of the manufacturers or distributors of fresh meat, cigarettes, high-grade flour, bananas, harvesters, sewing machines, and typewriters. Where the products were established staple items, horizontal combination tended to precede vertical integration. In the sugar, salt, leather, whiskey, glucose, starch, biscuit, kerosene, fertilizer, and rubber industries a large number of small manufacturers first combined into large business units and then created their marketing and buying organizations. For a number of reasons the makers of the newer types of products found the older outlets less satisfactory and felt more of a need for direct marketing than did the manufacturers of the long-established goods.

Integration via the Creation of Marketing Organization

The story of the changes and the possible reasons behind them can be more clearly understood by examining briefly the experience of a few innovating firms. First, consider the experience of companies that grew large through the creation of a nation-wide marketing and distributing organization. Here the story of Gustavus F. Swift and his brother Edwin is a significant one. Gustavus F. Swift, an Easterner, came relatively late to the Chicago meat-packing business. Possibly because he was from Massachusetts, he appreciated the potential market for fresh western meat in the eastern cities.² For after the Civil War, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other cities were rapidly outrunning their local meat supply. At the same time, great herds of cattle were gathering on the western plains. Swift saw the possibilities of connecting the new market with the new source of supply by the use of the refrigerated railroad car. In 1878, shortly after his first experimental shipment of refrigerated meat, he formed a partnership with his younger brother, Edwin, to market fresh western meat in the eastern cities.

For the next decade, Swift struggled hard to carry out his plans, the essence of which was the creation, during the 1880's, of the nation-wide distributing and marketing organization built around a network of branch houses. Each "house" had its storage plant and its own marketing organization. The latter included outlets in major towns and cities, often managed by Swift's own salaried representatives. In marketing the product, Swift had to break down, through advertising and other means, the prejudices against eating meat killed more than a thousand miles away and many weeks earlier. At the same time he had to combat boycotts of local butchers and the concerted efforts of the National Butchers' Protective Association to prevent the sale of his meat in the urban markets.

To make effective use of the branch house network, the company soon began to market products other than beef. The "full line" soon came to include lamb, mutton, pork, and, some time later, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. The growing distributing organization soon demanded an increase in supply. So between 1888 and 1892, the Swifts set up meat-packing establishments in Kansas City, Omaha, and St. Louis, and, after the depression of the 1890's, three more in St. Joseph, St. Paul, and Ft. Worth. At the

² Swift's story as outlined in Louis F. Swift in collaboration with Arthur Van Vliissingen, *The Yankees of the Yards—the Biography of Gustavus Franklin Swift* (New York, 1928). The United States Bureau of Corporations, *Report of the Commissioner of Corporations on the Beef Industry*, March 3, 1905 (Washington, 1905), is excellent on the internal operations and external activities of the large meat-packing firms. There is additional information in the later three-volume *Report of the Federal Trade Commission on the Meat Packing Industry* (Washington, 1918-1919). R. A. Clemens, *The American Livestock and Meat Industry* (New York, 1923) has some useful background data.

same time, the company systematized the buying of its cattle and other products at the stockyards. In the 1890's, too, Swift began a concerted effort to make more profitable use of by-products.

Before the end of the 1890's, then, Swift had effectively fashioned a great, vertically integrated organization. The major departments — marketing, processing, purchasing, and accounting — were all tightly controlled from the central office in Chicago. A report of the Commissioner of Corporations published in 1905 makes clear the reason for such control:³

Differences in quality of animals and of their products are so great that the closest supervision of the Central Office is necessary to enforce the exercise of skill and sound judgement on the part of the agents who buy the stock, and the agents who sell the meat. With this object, the branches of the Selling and Accounting Department of those packing companies which have charge of the purchasing, killing, and dressing and selling of fresh meat, are organized in the most extensive and thorough manner. The Central Office is in constant telegraphic correspondence with the distributing houses, with a view to adjusting the supply of meat and the price as nearly as possible to the demand.

As this statement suggests, the other meat packers followed Swift's example. To compete effectively, Armour, Morris, Cudahy, and Schwarzschild & Sulzberger had to build up similar integrated organizations. Those that did not follow the Swift model were destined to remain small local companies. Thus by the middle of the 1890's, the meat-packing industry, with the rapid growth of these great vertically integrated firms had become oligopolistic (the "Big Five" had the major share of the market) and bureaucratic; each of the five had its many departments and several levels of management.

This story has parallels in other industries processing agricultural products. In tobacco, James B. Duke was the first to appreciate the growing market for the cigarette, a new product which was sold almost wholly in the cities.⁴ However, after he had applied machinery to the manufacture of cigarettes, production soon outran supply. Duke then concentrated on expanding the market through extensive advertising and the creation of a national and then world-wide selling organization. In 1884, he left Durham, North Carolina, for New York City, where he set up factories, sales, and administrative offices. New York was closer to his major urban markets, and was the more logical place to manage an international advertising campaign than Durham. While he was building his marketing department,

³ *Report of Commissioner of Corporations on the Beef Industry*, p. 21.

⁴ Some information on James B. Duke and the American Tobacco Company can be found in John W. Jenkins, *James B. Duke, Master Builder* (New York, 1927), chaps. 5-7, 10. More useful was the United States Bureau of Corporations, *Report of the Commissioner of Corporations on the Tobacco Industry* (Washington, 1909).

Duke was also creating the network of warehouses and buyers in the tobacco-growing areas of the country.

In 1890, he merged his company with five smaller competitors in the cigarette business to form the American Tobacco Company. By 1895 the activities of these firms had been consolidated into the manufacturing, marketing, purchasing, and finance departments of the single operating structure Duke had earlier fashioned. Duke next undertook development of a full line by handling all types of smoking and chewing tobacco. By the end of the century, his company completely dominated the tobacco business. Only two other firms, R. J. Reynolds & Company and P. Lorillard & Company had been able to build up comparable vertically integrated organizations. When they merged with American Tobacco they continued to retain their separate operating organizations. When the 1911 antitrust decree split these and other units off from the American company, the tobacco industry had become, like the meat-packing business, oligopolistic, and its dominant firms bureaucratic.

What Duke and Swift did for their industries, James S. Bell of the Washburn-Crosby Company did during these same years in the making and selling of high-grade flour to the urban bakeries and housewives, and Andrew J. Preston achieved in growing, transporting, and selling another new product for the urban market, the banana.⁵ Like Swift and Duke, both these men made their major innovations in marketing, and then went on to create large-scale, departmentalized, vertically integrated structures.

The innovators in new consumer durables followed much the same pattern. Both Cyrus McCormick, pioneer harvester manufacturer, and William Clark, the business brains of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, first sold through commissioned agents. Clark soon discovered that salaried men, working out of branch offices, could more effectively and at less cost display, demonstrate, and service sewing machines than could the agents.⁶ Just as important, the branch offices were able to provide the customer with essential credit. McCormick, while retaining the dealer to handle the final sales, came to appreciate the need for a strong selling and distributing organization, with warehouses, servicing facilities, and a large salaried force, to stand behind the dealer.⁷ So in the years following the Civil War, both

⁵ The story of Bell is outlined in James Gray, *Business Without Boundary, the Story of General Mills* (Minneapolis, 1954), and of Preston in Charles M. Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold* (New York, 1947).

⁶ The early Singer Sewing Machine experience is well analyzed in Andrew B. Jack, "The Channels of Distribution for an Innovation: the Sewing Machine Industry in America, 1860-1965," *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Vol. IX (Feb., 1957), pp. 113-141.

⁷ William T. Hutchinson, *Cyrus Hall McCormick* (New York, 1935), Vol. II, pp. 704-712.

McCormick and Singer Sewing Machine Company concentrated on building up national and then world-wide marketing departments. As they purchased their raw materials from a few industrial companies rather than from a mass of farmers, their purchasing departments were smaller, and required less attention than those in the firms processing farmers' products. But the net result was the creation of a very similar type of organization.

Integration via Horizontal Combination

In those industries making more standard goods, the creation of marketing organizations usually followed large-scale combinations of a number of small manufacturing firms. For these small firms, the coming of the railroad had in many cases enlarged their markets but simultaneously brought them for the first time into competition with many other companies. Most of these firms appear to have expanded production in order to take advantage of the new markets. As a result, their industries became plagued with overproduction and excess capacity; that is, continued production at full capacity threatened to drop prices below the cost of production. So in the 1880's and early 1890's, many small manufacturers in the leather, sugar, salt, distilling and other corn products, linseed and cotton oil, biscuit, petroleum, fertilizer and rubber boot and glove industries, joined in large horizontal combinations.

In most of these industries, combination was followed by consolidation and vertical integration, and the pattern was comparatively consistent. First, the new combinations concentrated their manufacturing activities in locations more advantageously situated to meet the new growing urban demands. Next they systematized and standardized their manufacturing processes. Then, except in the case of sugar and corn products (glucose and starch), the combinations began to build large distributing and smaller purchasing departments. In so doing, many dropped their initial efforts to buy out competitors or to drive them out of business by price-cutting. Instead they concentrated on the creation of a more efficient flow from the producers of their raw materials to the ultimate consumer, and of the development and maintenance of markets through brand names and advertising. Since the large majority of these combinations began as regional groupings, most industries came to have more than one great firm. Only oil, sugar, and corn products remained long dominated by a single company. By World War I, partly because of the dissolutions under the Sherman Act, these industries had also become oligopolistic, and their leading firms vertically integrated.

Specific illustrations help to make these generalizations more precise. The

best-known is the story of the oil industry, but equally illustrative is the experience of the leading distilling, baking, and rubber companies.

The first permanent combination in the whiskey industry came in 1887 when a large number of Midwestern distillers, operating more than 80 small plants, formed the Distillers' and Cattle Feeders' Trust.⁸ Like other trusts, it adopted the more satisfactory legal form of a holding company shortly after New Jersey in 1889 passed the general incorporation law for holding companies. The major efforts of the Distillers Company were, first, to concentrate production in a relatively few plants. By 1895 only 21 were operating. The managers maintained that the large volume per plant permitted by such concentration would mean lower costs, and also that the location of few plants more advantageously in relation to supply and marketing would still reduce expenses further. However, the company kept the price of whiskey up, and since the cost of setting up a distillery was small, it soon had competition from small local plants. The company's answer was to purchase the new competitors and to cut prices. This strategy proved so expensive that the enterprise was unable to survive the depression of the 1890's.

Shortly before going into receivership in 1896, the Distillers Company had begun to think more about marketing. In 1895, it had planned to spend a million dollars to build up a distributing and selling organization in the urban East — the company's largest market. In 1898, through the purchase of the Standard Distilling & Distributing Company and the Spirits Distributing Company, it did acquire a marketing organization based in New York City. In 1903, the marketing and manufacturing units were combined into a single operating organization under the direction of the Distillers Securities Company. At the same time, the company's president announced plans to concentrate on the development of brand names and specialties, particularly through advertising and packaging.⁹ By the early years of the twentieth century, then, the Distillers Company had become a vertically integrated, departmentalized, centralized operating organization, competing in the modern manner, more through advertising and product differentiation than price.

⁸ The major sources of information on combination and consolidation in the distilling industry are Jeremiah W. Jenks, "The Development of the Whiskey Trust," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. IV (June, 1889), pp. 296-319; J. W. Jenks and W. E. Clark, *The Trust Problem* (rev. ed.; New York, 1917), pp. 141-149. The annual reports of the Distilling and Cattle Feeding Company and its various successors provide some useful additional data, as does the Industrial Commission, *Preliminary Report on Trusts and Industrial Combinations* (Washington, 1900), Vol. I, pp. 74-89, 167-259, 813-848, and Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* (New York, 1929), Vol. II, pp. 505-506. Changes in taxes on liquors also affected the company's policies in the early 1890's.

⁹ *Annual Report of the President of the Distillers Securities Company for 1903.*

The experience of the biscuit industry is even more explicit. The National Biscuit Company came into being in 1898 as a merger of three regional combinations: the New York Biscuit Company formed in 1890, the American Biscuit and Manufacturing Company, and the United States Biscuit Company founded a little later.¹⁰ Its initial objective was to control price and production, but as in the case of the Distillers Company, this strategy proved too expensive. The Annual Report for 1901 suggests why National Biscuit shifted its basic policies:¹¹

This Company is four years old and it may be of interest to shortly review its history. . . . When the Company started, it was an aggregation of plants. It is now an organized business. When we look back over the four years, we find that a radical change has been wrought in our methods of business. In the past, the managers of large merchandising corporations have found it necessary, for success, to control or limit competition. So when this company started, it was thought that we must control competition, and that to do this we must either fight competition or buy it. The first meant a ruinous war of prices, and a great loss of profit; the second, a constantly increasing capitalization. Experience soon proved to us that, instead of bringing success, either of those courses, if persevered in, must bring disaster. This led us to reflect whether it was necessary to control competition. . . . we soon satisfied ourselves that within the Company itself we must look for success.

We turned our attention and bent our energies to improving the internal management of our business, to getting full benefit from purchasing our raw materials in large quantities, to economizing the expenses of manufacture, to systematizing and rendering more effective our selling department; and above all things and before all things to improve the quality of our goods and the condition in which they should reach the customer.

It became the settled policy of this Company to buy out no competition. . . .

In concentrating on distribution, the company first changed its policy from selling in bulk to wholesalers to marketing small packages to retailers. It developed the various "Uneeda Biscuit" brands, which immediately became popular. "The next point," the same Annual Report continued, "was to reach the customer. Thinking we had something that the customer

¹⁰ The information on National Biscuit comes largely from its annual reports.

¹¹ *Annual Report of the National Biscuit Company for the Year Ending December, 1901*, January 3, 1902. References to centralizing of manufacturing facilities appear in several early annual reports. As this was written before Theodore Roosevelt had started to make the Sherman Act an effective antitrust instrument and Ida Tarbell and other journalists had begun to make "muck raking" of big business popular and profitable, the Biscuit Company's shift in policy could hardly have been the result of the pressure of public opinion or the threat of government action.

wanted, we had to advise the customer of its existence. We did this by extensive advertising." This new packaging and advertising not only quickly created a profitable business, but also required the building of a sizable marketing organization. Since flour could be quickly and easily purchased in quantity from large milling firms, the purchasing requirements were less complex, and so the company needed a smaller purchasing organization. On the other hand, it spent much energy after 1901 in improving plant layout and manufacturing processes in order to cut production costs and to improve and standardize quality. Throughout the first decade of its history, National Biscuit continued the policy of "centralizing" manufacturing operations, particularly in its great New York and Chicago plants.

In the rubber boot, shoe, and glove industries, the story is much the same. Expansion of manufacturing facilities and increasing competition as early as 1874, led to the formation, by several leading firms, of the Associated Rubber Shoe Companies — an organization for setting price and production schedules through its board of directors.¹² This company continued until 1886. Its successor, the Rubber Boot and Shoe Company, which lasted only a year, attempted, besides controlling prices and production, to handle marketing, which had always been done by commissioned agents. After five years of uncontrolled competition, four of the five firms that had organized the selling company again combined, this time with the assistance of a large rubber importer, Charles A. Flint. The resulting United States Rubber Company came, by 1898, to control 75 per cent of the nation's rubber boot, shoe, and glove output.

At first the new company remained a decentralized holding company. Each constituent company retained its corporate identity with much freedom of action, including the purchasing of raw materials and the selling of finished products, which was done, as before, through jobbers. The central office's concern was primarily with controlling price and production schedules. Very soon, however, the company began, in the words of the 1896 Annual Report, a policy of "perfecting consolidation of purchasing, selling, and manufacturing."¹³ This was to be accomplished in four ways. First, as the 1895 Annual Report had pointed out, the managers agreed "so far as practicable, to consolidate the purchasing of all supplies of raw materials for the various manufacturies into one single buying agency, believing that the pur-

¹² The background for the creation of the United States Rubber Company can be found in Nancy P. Norton, "Industrial Pioneer: the Goodyear Metallic Rubber Shoe Company" (Ph.D. thesis, Radcliffe College, 1950), Constance McL. Green, *History of Naugatuck, Connecticut* (New Haven, 1948), pp. 126-131, 193-194, and Clark, *History of Manufactures*, Vol. II, pp. 479-481, Vol. III, pp. 235-237. The company's annual reports provide most of the information on its activities.

¹³ *The Fifth Annual Report of the United States Rubber Company*, March 31, 1897, pp. 6-7.

chase of large quantities of goods can be made at more advantageous figures than the buying of small isolated lots.”¹⁴ The second new “general policy” was “to undertake to reduce the number of brands of goods manufactured, and to consolidate the manufacturing of the remaining brands in those factories which have demonstrated superior facilities for production or advantageous labor conditions. This course was for the purpose of utilizing the most efficient instruments of production and closing those that were inefficient and unprofitable.” The third policy was to consolidate sales through the formation of a “Selling Department,” which was to handle all goods made by the constituent companies in order to achieve “economy in the distribution expense.” Selling was now to be handled by a central office in the New York City headquarters, with branch offices throughout the United States and Europe. Of the three great new departments, actually manufacturing was the slowest to be fully consolidated and centralized. Finally, the treasurer’s office at headquarters began to obtain accurate data on profit and loss through the institution of uniform, centralized cost accounting.

Thus United States Rubber, National Biscuit, and the Distillers Securities Company soon came to have organizational structures paralleling those of Swift and American Tobacco. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the leading firms in many consumers’ goods industries had become departmentalized and centralized. This was the organizational concomitant to vertical integration. Each major function, manufacturing, sales, purchasing, and finance, became managed by a single and separate department head, usually a vice president, who, assisted by a director or a manager, had full authority and responsibility for the activities of his unit. These departmental chiefs, with the president, coordinated and evaluated the work of the different functional units, and made policy for the company as a whole. In coordinating, appraising, and policy-making, the president and the vice presidents in charge of departments came to rely more and more on the accounting and statistical information, usually provided by the finance department, on costs, output, purchases, and sales.

CHANGES IN THE PRODUCERS’ GOODS INDUSTRIES

Bureaucracy and oligopoly came to the producers’ goods industries somewhat later than to those making products for the mass market. Until the depression of the 1890’s, most of the combinations and consolidations had been in the consumers’ goods industries. After that, the major changes came in those industries selling to other businesses and industrialists. The reason

¹⁴ This and the following quotations are from the *Fourth Annual Report of the United States Rubber Company*, May 25, 1896, pp. 4-5, 7-8.

for the time difference seems to be that the city took a little longer to become a major market for producers' goods. Throughout the 1880's, railroad construction and operation continued to take the larger share of the output of steel, copper, power machinery, explosives, and other heavy industries. Then in the 1890's, as railroad construction declined the rapidly growing American cities became the primary market. The insatiable demand for urban lighting, communication, heat, power, transportation, water, sewerage, and other services directly and indirectly took over growing quantities of electric lighting apparatus, telephones, copper wire, newsprint, streetcars, coal, and iron, steel, copper, and lead piping, structures and fixtures; while the constantly expanding urban construction created new calls on the power machinery and explosives as well as the metals industries. Carnegie's decision in 1887 to shift the Homestead Works, the nation's largest and most modern steel plant, from rails to structures, symbolized the coming change in the market.¹⁵

Also the new combinations and consolidations in the consumers' goods industries increased the demand for producers' products in the urban areas. Standard Oil, American Tobacco, Swift and other meat packers, McCormick's Harvesting Machinery and other farm implement firms, American Sugar, Singer Sewing Machine, and many other great consumer goods companies concentrated their production in or near major cities, particularly New York and Chicago.

The changes after 1897 differed from the earlier ones not only in types of industries in which they occurred but also in the way they were promoted and financed. Combinations and vertical integration in the consumer goods industries before 1897 had been almost all engineered and financed by the manufacturers themselves, so the stock control remained in the hands of the industrialists. After 1897, however, outside funds and often outside promoters, who were usually Wall Street financiers, played an increasingly significant role in industrial combination and consolidation. The change reflected a new attitude of investor and financier who controlled capital toward the value of industrial securities.¹⁶ Before the depression of the 1890's investment and speculation had been overwhelmingly in railroad stocks and

¹⁵ Clark, *History of Manufactures*, Vol. II, chap. 19.

¹⁶ The story of the shift from rails to industrials as acceptable investments is told in Thomas R. Navin and Marian V. Sears, "The Rise of the Market for Industrial Securities, 1887-1902," *Business History Review*, Vol. XIX (June, 1955), pp. 105-138. Government securities were, of course, important in the years before 1850 and during and after the Civil War, but in the late 1870's and 1880's as in the 1850's, railroads dominated the American security exchanges. As Navin and Sears point out, some coal and mining firms were traded on the New York Exchange, but the only manufacturing securities, outside of those of the Pullman Company, were some textile stocks traded on the local Boston Exchange. The connections between the railroad expansion and the beginnings of modern Wall Street are described in detail in Chandler, *Poor*, chap. 4.

bonds. The institutionalizing of the American security market in Wall Street had come, in fact, as a response to the needs for financing the first great railroad boom in the 1850's.

The railroads, however, had made a poor showing financially in the middle years of the 1890's when one-third of the nation's trackage went through receivership and financial reorganization. The dividend records of some of the new large industrial corporations, on the other hand, proved unexpectedly satisfactory. Moreover, railroad construction was slowing, and the major financial and administrative reorganizations of the 1890's had pretty well stabilized the industry. So there was less demand for investment bankers and brokers to market new issues of railroad securities.

Industrials were obviously the coming field, and by 1898 there was a rush in Wall Street to get in on this new business. The sudden availability of funds stimulated, and undoubtedly overstimulated, industrial combination. Many of the mergers in the years after 1897 came more from the desire of financiers for promotional profits, and because combination had become the thing to do, and less from the special needs and opportunities in the several industries. Moreover, as the financiers and promoters began to provide funds for mergers and expansion, they began to acquire, for the first time, the same type of control over industrial corporations that they had enjoyed in railroads since the 1850's.

The changes in the producers' goods industries were essentially like those in the consumer goods firms before the depression. Only after 1897 the changes came more rapidly, partly because of Wall Street pressures; and the differences that did develop between the two types of industries reflected the basic differences in the nature of their businesses. Like the companies making consumer goods, those manufacturing items for producers set up nation-wide and often world-wide marketing and distributing organizations, consolidated production into a relatively few large plants and fashioned purchasing departments. Because they had fewer customers, their sales departments tended to be smaller than those in firms selling to the mass market. On the other hand, they were more concerned with obtaining control over the sources of their supply than were most of the consumer goods companies.

Here a distinction can be made between the manufacturers who made semi-finished products from raw materials taken from the ground, and those who made finished goods from semi-finished products. The former, producing a uniform product for a few large industrial customers, developed only small sales departments and concentrated on obtaining control of raw materials, and often of the means of transporting such materials from mine to market. The latter, selling a larger variety of products and ones that often

required servicing and financing, had much larger marketing and distributing organizations. These makers of finished goods, except for a brief period around 1900, rarely attempted to control their raw materials or their semi-finished steel and other metal supplies. They did, however, in the years after 1900, begin to buy or set up plants making parts and components that went into the construction of their finished products.

Except in steel, integration usually followed combination in the producers' goods industries. And for both makers of semi-finished and finished goods, integration became more of a defense strategy than it was in the consumers' goods industries processing agricultural products. In the latter the manufacturers had an assured supply of raw materials from the output of the nation's millions of farms. In the former, on the other hand, they had to consider the threatening possibility of an outsider obtaining complete control of raw materials or supplies.

Integration and Combination in the Extractive Industries

By the early twentieth century nearly all the companies making semi-finished product goods controlled the mining of their own raw materials. The industries in which they operated can, therefore, be considered as extractive. This was also true of two consumers' goods industries: oil and fertilizer. The experience of these two provides a good introduction to the motives for integration and the role it played in the coming of "big business" in steel, copper, paper, explosives and other businesses producing semi-finished goods.

In both the oil and fertilizer industries, control over raw materials came well after combination and consolidation of groups of small manufacturing firms. The Standard Oil Trust, after its formation in 1882, consolidated its manufacturing activities and then created a domestic marketing organization. Only in the late 1880's, when the new Indiana field began to be developed and the older Pennsylvania ones began to decline, did the Trust consider going into the production of crude oil. Both Allan Nevins in his biography of John D. Rockefeller and the Hidy's in their history of Standard Oil agree that the need to be assured of a steady supply of crude oil was the major reason for the move into production.¹⁷ Other reasons, the Hidy's indicate, were a fear that the producers might combine and so control supplies, and the desire of the pipeline subsidiaries to keep their facilities operating at full capacity. Although neither Nevins nor the Hidy's suggest that the

¹⁷ Ralph W. Hidy and Muriel E. Hidy, *Pioneering in Big Business, 1882-1911* (New York, 1955), pp. 176-188. Allan Nevins, *Study in Power, John D. Rockefeller, Industrialist and Philanthropist* (New York, 1953), Vol. II, pp. 1-3. Nevins adds that another reason for the move into production was "partly to limit the number of active wells and reduce the overproduction of crude oil," Vol. II, p. 2, but he gives no documentation for this statement.

desire to obtain a more efficient flow of oil from the well to the distributor was a motive for this integration, both describe the committees and staff units that were formed at the central office at 26 Broadway to assure more effective coordination between production, refining, and marketing.

What little evidence there is suggests somewhat the same story in the fertilizer industry. Shortly after its organization in the mid-1890's, the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company, a merger of many small southern fertilizer firms, began, apparently for the same defensive reasons, to purchase phosphate mines. Quickly its major competitor, the American Agricultural Chemical Company, a similar combination of small northeastern companies formed in 1893, responded by making its own purchases of mines. As the latter company explained in a later annual report: "The growth of the business, as well as the fact that available phosphate properties were being fast taken up, indicated that it was the part of wisdom to make additional provision for the future, and accordingly . . . available phosphate properties were purchased, and the necessary plants were erected and equipped, so the company now has in hand a supply of phosphate rock which will satisfy its growing demand for 60 years and upwards."¹⁸ However, neither of these companies appeared to have set up organizational devices to guide the flow of materials from mine to plant to market; nor did the managers of a third large integrated fertilizer company, the International Agricultural Corporation, formed in 1909.

Defensive motives were certainly significant in the changes in the steel industry. Here the story can be most briefly described by focusing on the history of the industry's leader, the Carnegie Steel Company.¹⁹ That company's chairman, Henry C. Frick, had in the early 1890's consolidated and rationalized the several Carnegie manufacturing properties in and about Pittsburgh into an integrated whole. At the same time, he systematized and departmentalized its purchasing, engineering, and marketing activities. The fashioning of a sales department became more necessary since the shift from rails to structures had enlarged the number of the company's customers.

Then in 1896 the Carnegie company made a massive purchase of ore lands when it joined with Henry W. Oliver to buy out the Rockefeller holdings in

¹⁸ *Annual Report of the American Agricultural Chemical Company, August 14, 1907* also the same company's *Annual Report* dated August 25, 1902. In addition to the annual reports of the two companies, Clark, *History of Manufactures*, Vol. III, pp. 289-291, provides information. There is a brief summary of the story of the International Agricultural Corporation in Williams Haynes, *American Chemical Industry - A History* (New York, 1945), Vol. III, p. 173.

¹⁹ The information on the Carnegie Steel Company is taken from Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life of Andrew Carnegie*, 2 vols. (New York, 1932), George Harvey, *Henry Clay Frick, the Man* (New York, 1928), James H. Bridge, *The Inside Story of the Carnegie Steel Company* (New York, 1903.)

the Mesabi Range. As Allan Nevins points out, the depression of the 1890's had worked a rapid transformation in the recently discovered Mesabi region.²⁰ By 1896, the ore fields had become dominated by three great interests: the Oliver Mining Company, the Minnesota Mining Company, and Rockefeller's Consolidated Iron Mines. A fourth, James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad, was just entering the field. Frick's purchases, therefore, gave the Carnegie company an assured supply of cheap ore, as well as providing it with a fleet of ore ships. Next, Frick and Carnegie bought and rebuilt a railroad from Lake Erie to Pittsburgh to carry the new supplies to the mills.

Yet the steel company's managers did little to coordinate systematically the mining, shipping, and manufacturing units in their industrial empire. These activities did not become departments controlled from one central office but remained completely separate companies under independent managements, whose contact with one another was through negotiated contracts. This was the same sort of relation that existed between the Frick Coke Company and Carnegie Steel from the time Frick had joined Carnegie in 1889. If the Carnegie company's strategy had been to provide a more effective flow of materials as well as to assure itself of not being caught without a supply of ore and the means to transport it, then Frick and Carnegie would have created some sort of central coordinating office.

The steel industry responded quickly to the Carnegie purchases.²¹ In 1898, Chicago's Illinois Steel Company, with capital supplied by J. P. Morgan & Company, joined the Lorain Steel Company (with plants on Lake Erie and in Johnstown, Pennsylvania) to purchase the Minnesota Mining Company, a fleet of ore boats, and railroads in the Mesabi and Chicago areas. Again, little attempt was made to coordinate mining and shipping with manufacturing and marketing. In the same year, many iron and steel firms in Ohio and Pennsylvania merged to form the Republic and National Steel Companies. Shortly thereafter, a similar combination in the Sault Sainte Marie area became the Consolidated Lake Superior Company. These three new

²⁰ Nevins, *Rockefeller*, Vol. II, p. 252.

²¹ The experience of the other steel firms comes primarily from their annual reports and from prospectuses and other reports in the Corporation Record Division of Baker Library. A company publication, *J & L—The Growth of an American Business* (Pittsburgh, 1953) has some additional information on that company. Also, books listed in footnote 26 on the United States Steel Corporation have something on these companies. Two other steel companies listed in Table I made major changes somewhat before and after the period immediately following 1898. One, the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co., established in 1892, quickly became an integrated steel company in the Colorado area. The Bethlehem Steel Corporation was formed in 1904 when Charles F. Schwab, formerly of the Carnegie company and the United States Steel Corporation, reorganized the finances, corporate structure, and administrative organization of the bankrupt United States Shipbuilding Company.

mergers began at once to set up their marketing organizations and to obtain control by lease and purchase of raw materials and transportation facilities. In 1900, several small firms making high-grade steel did much the same thing by the formation of the Crucible Steel Company of America. In these same years, the larger, established steel companies, like Lackawanna, Cambria, and Jones & Laughlin obtained control of more supplies of ore, coke, and limestone and simultaneously reorganized their manufacturing and marketing organizations. Like Carnegie and Federal, they at first made little effort to bring their mining and coke operations under the direct control of the central office.

In copper, defensive motives for integration appear to have been somewhat less significant. In the 1890's, mining, smelting and refining were combined on a large scale. During the 'eighties the railroad had opened up many western mining areas, particularly in Montana and Arizona; a little later the new electrical and telephone businesses greatly increased the demand for copper. Mining firms like Anaconda, Calumet & Hecla, and Phelps Dodge moved into smelting and refining, while the Guggenheims' Philadelphia Smelting & Refining Company began to buy mining properties.²² In the copper industry, the high cost of ore shipment meant that smelting and — after the introduction of the electrolytic process in the early 1890's — even refining could be done more cheaply close to the mines. Of the large copper firms, only Calumet & Hecla and the Guggenheims set up refineries in the East before 1898, and both made use of direct water transportation.

After 1898, several large mergers occurred in the nonferrous metals industries. Nearly all were initially promoted by eastern financiers. Of these, the most important were Amalgamated Copper, engineered by H. H. Rogers of Standard Oil and Marcus Daly of Anaconda, the American Smelting and Refining Company which the Guggenheims came to control, and United Copper promoted by F. Augustus Heinze. United Copper remained little more than a holding company. Amalgamated set up a subsidiary to operate a large refinery at Perth Amboy and another, the United Metals Selling Company, with headquarters in New York City, to market the products of its mining and processing subsidiaries. The holding company's central offices in New York remained small and apparently did comparatively little to coordinate the activities of its several operating companies. The Guggenheims formed a much tighter organization with direct headquarters control of the company's mining, shipping, smelting and marketing departments.

²² Information on the mining companies came from their annual reports and from Isaac P. Marcossion's two books, *Magic Metal — the Story of the American Smelting and Refining Company* (New York, 1949), and *Anaconda* (New York, 1957), also Clark, *History of Manufactures*, Vol. II, pp. 368–369.

On the whole, there appears to have been somewhat closer coordination between mining and processing in the larger copper than in the major steel companies.

Lowering of costs through more effective coordination appears to have been a major motive for consolidation and combination in three other businesses whose raw materials came from the ground: explosives, paper, and coal.²³ The mergers that created the Pittsburgh Coal Company in 1899 and greatly enlarged the Consolidation Coal Company in 1903 were followed by a reorganization and consolidation of mining properties and then by the creation of large marketing departments which operated throughout most of the country. The merger of close to 30 paper companies, forming the International Paper Company in 1899, was followed first by consolidation and reorganization of the manufacturing plants, next by the formation of a national marketing organization with headquarters in New York City, and then by the purchase of large tracts of timber in Maine and Canada. These three activities were departmentalized under vice presidents and controlled from the New York office. In all these cases, the central office was responsible for the flow of materials from mine or forest to the customer or retailer.

The explosive industries underwent a comparable sweeping change in 1902 and 1903. Since the 1870's, price and production schedules had been decided by the industry's Gunpowder Trade Association, and almost from its beginning, that Association had been controlled by one firm, the E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Company. However, the member concerns had retained their own corporate identities and managements. In 1902, the DuPonts bought out a large number of these independent companies through exchanges of stock, and then consolidated them into a single centralized organization. In the process, plants were shut down, others enlarged, and new ones built. A nation-wide selling organization was created, and centralized accounting, purchasing, engineering and traffic departments formed. Once the new organization was completed, then the company's executives obtained control of their raw materials through the purchase of nitrate mines and deposits in Chile.

²³ The story of the leading explosives, paper, salt and coal companies comes from annual reports and also from Charles E. Beachley, *History of the Consolidation Coal Company 1864-1934* (New York, 1934), George H. Love, *An Exciting Century in Coal* (New York, 1955), the company-written, *The International Paper Company, 1898-1948* (n.p., 1948), William S. Dutton, *DuPont - One Hundred and Forty Years* (New York, 1940), and *U.S. v. E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Company et al. in Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Delaware, #280 in Equity* (1909), *Defendants' Record Testimony*, Vol. I, and for the paper industry, Clark, *History of Manufactures*, Vol. III, pp. 245-252. The American Writing Paper Company, though less successful, had many parallels to International Paper.

Except possibly in paper, the control of price and production does not appear to have been a major motive for the initial combinations in the extractive industries making producers' goods. In steel before 1901, and in nonferrous metals and coal, there were several combinations, but none acquired as much as 20 per cent of the market. Nor is there any evidence that the creators of the different mergers, while they were forming their organizations, were arranging with one another to set over-all price and production schedules. In explosives, control of competition could not have been a significant reason for the 1902 changes since the DuPont company had enjoyed such control since the 1870's. In coal and explosives, and possibly in copper, the major motive for combination, consolidation, and the integration of supply with the manufacturing and marketing processes seems to have been an expectation of lowered costs through the creation of a national distributing organization, the consolidation of manufacturing activities, and the effective coordination of the different industrial processes by one central office. In steel and possibly copper, the desire for an assured supply of raw materials appears to have been more significant in encouraging combination and integration.

Changes and Integration in the Finished Producers' Goods Industries

Control of price and production was, on the other hand, much more of an obvious motive for combination and resulting consolidation in the industries manufacturing finished products or machinery from the semi-finished materials produced by the extractive firms. Concern over supply, however, was also a cause for change, for after 1898 the users of steel, copper, coal, and other semi-finished materials felt threatened by the growing number of combinations among their suppliers. In any case, between 1898 and 1900 there was a wave of mergers in these industries, largely Wall Street financed, which led to the formation of American Tin Plate, American Wire & Steel, American Steel Hoop, National Tube, American Bridge, American Sheet Metal, Shelby Steel Tube, American Can, National Enameling & Stamping Company and a number of other combinations among steel-fabricating firms.²⁴ At the same time, there were many amalgamations in the power machinery and implement businesses, such as American Car & Foundry, American Locomotive, Allis-Chalmers, International Steam Pump, and International Harvester. The largest combination among the copper users, the American Brass Company, came a little later, in 1903, after the Guggenheims, Rogers, and Heinze had completed the major copper mergers.

²⁴ The best brief summary of these mergers and the formation of the United States Steel Corporation is in Eliot Jones, *The Trust Problem in the United States* (New York, 1924), pp. 189-200. The companies' annual reports and prospectuses provide additional material.

Nearly all these combinations quickly consolidated their constituent companies into a single operating organization. Manufacturing facilities were unified and systematized, over-all accounting procedures instituted, and national and often world-wide distributing organizations formed. Many set up central traffic and purchasing departments; some even began to assure themselves control over supply by building up their own rolling mills and blast furnaces. As American Wire & Steel and National Tube began to make their own steel, they cancelled contracts with Carnegie and other semi-finished steel producers. This development, in turn, led Carnegie to develop plans for fabricating his own finished products.²⁵

The resulting threat of overcapacity and price-cutting led to the formation of the United States Steel Corporation.²⁶ This giant merger, which included Carnegie, Federal and National Steel, and the first six of the fabricating companies listed above, continued on as a combination. Although the activities of the various subsidiaries were re-formed and redefined, there was no consolidation. United States Steel remained a holding company only, and the central office at 72 Broadway did comparatively little to coordinate the operations of its many subsidiary companies.

After 1901, the fabricators and the machinery manufacturers made little attempt to produce their own steel or copper. Nor did the makers of semi-finished products try, for some years to come, to do their own fabricating. Possibly the metal users realized that even with the formation of United States Steel they were fairly certain of alternative sources of supply. Also they may have found that once they had combined they had enough bargaining power to assure themselves of a supply of steel and other materials more cheaply than they could make it themselves.

While such firms no longer sought to control their basic materials, many, particularly the machinery makers like General Electric, Westinghouse, American Car & Foundry, International Harvester and, a little later, General Motors, began to purchase or set up subsidiaries or departments to make parts and components.²⁷ Here again the motive was essentially defensive. Since much of their manufacturing had now become mainly assembling, they wanted to be sure to have a supply of parts available at all times. The lack of a vital part could temporarily shut down a plant. However, they expected to take only a portion of the output; a major share was sold to outsiders. One outstanding exception to this pattern was Henry Ford. He came

²⁵ Hendrick, *Carnegie*, Vol. II, pp. 116-119.

²⁶ The beginnings and the operation of the United States Steel Corporation are outlined in Abraham Berglund, *The United States Steel Corporation: A Study of Growth and Combination in the Iron and Steel Industry* (New York, 1907), Arundel Cotter, *The Authentic History of the United States Steel Corporation* (New York, 1916), Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Elbert H. Gary, the Story of Steel* (New York, 1925).

²⁷ This generalization is based on the annual reports of the several companies.

to control his raw materials as well as his parts and components, and rarely sold such parts to outside companies. But Ford's insistence on having a completely integrated organization from mine to market, concentrated largely in one huge plant, proved to be one of the most costly mistakes in American business history.

Control of parts and accessory units led to a diversification of the types of products these manufacturing companies made and sold. Such diversification brought, over time, important changes in business organization. Even more significant for stimulating product diversification was the new "full line" strategy adopted by a number of these recently consolidated concerns. Such a policy, initiated largely to help assure the maximum use of the new departments, encouraged technological as well as organizational change.

Pioneers in developing "full lines" in the producers' goods industries were the two great electrical companies: General Electric and Westinghouse. Unlike almost any other of the leading American industrial companies in 1900, these two had begun as research and development rather than manufacturing organizations. Because of their origins, they had the skilled personnel and the necessary equipment to move, in the mid-1890's, from making lighting equipment alone to manufacturing many lines of electric traction and power machinery products.²⁸ Allis-Chalmers, International Steam Pump, and American Locomotive began, shortly after their formation and subsequent consolidations, to develop new lines using electric and gasoline engines.²⁹ International Harvester, building up a number of farm implement lines, also started to experiment with the use of the gasoline engine for machinery on the farm. In this same first decade of the twentieth century, rubber, explosive, and chemical companies began to turn to industrial chemistry in their search to develop broader lines of products.

Continuing diversification came, however, largely in industries where science, particularly chemistry and physics, could be most easily applied. And it was in these industries, and in those which were directly affected by the coming of two new sources of power, electricity and the internal combustion engine, that the major innovations in American industry came after 1900. The chemical, automotive, power machinery, rubber, and petroleum industries led the way to the development of new processes and products, new ways of internal organization and new techniques of external competi-

²⁸ As is well described in Harold C. Passer, *The Electrical Manufacturers* (Cambridge, 1953).

²⁹ The development of new lines by Allis-Chalmers, International Steam Pump, and American Locomotive is mentioned in their annual reports in the first decade of the twentieth century. International Harvester's similar "full line" policies are described in Cyrus McCormick, *The Century of the Reaper* (New York, 1931), chaps. 6-9, and United States Bureau of Corporations, *The International Harvester Co., March 3, 1913* (Washington, 1913), especially pp. 156-158.

tion as the new century unfolded. The metals industries and those processing agricultural goods have, on the other hand, changed relatively little since the beginning of the century. In these industries, the same firms make much the same products, use much the same processes, and compete in much the same manner in the 1950's as they did in the 1900's. For them the greatest period of change came in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION: THE BASIC INNOVATIONS

The middle of the first decade of the new century might be said to mark the end of an era. By 1903, the great merger movement was almost over, and by then the metals industries and those processing agricultural products had developed patterns of internal organization and external competition which were to remain. In those years, too, leading chemical, electrical, rubber, power machinery and implement companies had initiated their "full line" policy, and had instituted the earliest formal research and development departments created in this country. In this decade also, electricity was becoming for the first time a significant source of industrial power, and the automobile was just beginning to revolutionize American transportation. From 1903 on, the new generators of power and the new technologies appear to have become the dominant stimuli to innovation in American industry, and such innovations were primarily those which created new products and processes. Changes in organizational methods and marketing techniques were largely responses to technological advances.

This seems much less true of the changes during the 20 to 25 years before 1903. In that period, the basic innovations were more in the creation of new forms of organization and new ways of marketing. The great modern corporation, carrying on the major industrial processes, namely, purchasing, and often production of materials and parts, manufacturing, marketing, and finance — all within the same organizational structure — had its beginnings in that period. Such organizations hardly existed, outside of the railroads, before the 1880's. By 1900 they had become the basic business unit in American industry.

Each of these major processes became managed by a corporate department, and all were coordinated and supervised from a central office. Of the departments, marketing was the most significant. The creation of nationwide distributing and selling organizations was the initial step in the growth of many large consumer goods companies. Mergers in both the consumer and producer goods industries were almost always followed by the formation of a centralized sales department.

The consolidation of plants under a single manufacturing department usually accompanied or followed the formation of a national marketing organization. The creation of such a manufacturing department normally meant the concentration of production in fewer and larger plants, and such consolidation probably lowered unit costs and increased output per worker. The creation of such a department in turn led to the setting up of central traffic, purchasing, and often engineering organizations. Large-scale buying, more rational routing of raw materials and finished products, more systematic plant lay-out, and plant location in relation to materials and markets probably lowered costs still further. Certainly the creators of these organizations believed that it did. In the extractive and machinery industries integration went one step further. Here the motives for controlling raw materials or parts and components were defensive as well as designed to cut costs through providing a more efficient flow of materials from mine to market.

These great national industrial organizations required a large market to provide the volume necessary to support the increased overhead costs. Also, to be profitable, they needed careful coordination between the different functional departments. This coordination required a steady flow of accurate data on costs, sales, and on all purchasing, manufacturing, and marketing activities. As a result, the comptroller's office became an increasingly important department. In fact, one of the first moves after a combination by merger or purchase was to institute more effective and detailed accounting procedures. Also, the leading entrepreneurs of the period, men like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Swift, Duke, Preston, Clark, and the DuPonts, had to become, as had the railroad executives of an earlier generation, experts in reading and interpreting business statistics.

Consolidation and departmentalization meant that the leading industrial corporations became operating rather than holding companies, in the sense that the officers and managers of the companies were directly concerned with operating activities. In fact, of the 50 companies with the largest assets in 1909, only United States Steel, Amalgamated Copper, and one or two other copper companies remained purely holding companies. In most others, the central office included the heads of the major functional departments, usually the president, vice presidents, and sometimes a chairman of the board and one or two representatives of financial interests. These men made major policy and administrative decisions and evaluated the performance of the departments and the corporation as a whole. In the extractive industries a few companies, like Standard Oil (N.J.) and some of the metals companies, were partly holding and partly operating companies. At Standard Oil nearly all important decisions were made in the central headquarters, at

26 Broadway, which housed not only the presidents of the subsidiaries but the powerful policy formulating and coordinating committees.³⁰ But in some of the metals companies, the subsidiaries producing and transporting raw materials retained a large degree of autonomy.

The coming of the large vertically integrated, centralized, functionally departmentalized industrial organization altered the internal and external situations in which and about which business decisions were made. Information about markets, supplies, and operating performance as well as suggestions for action often had to come up through the several levels of the departmental hierarchies, while decisions and suggestions based on these data had to be transmitted down the same ladder for implementation. Executives on each level became increasingly specialists in one function — in sales, production, purchasing, or finance — and most remained in one department and so handled one function only for the major part of their business careers. Only he who climbed to the very top of the departmental ladder had a chance to see his own company as a single operating unit. Where a company's markets, sources of raw materials, and manufacturing processes remained relatively stable, as was true in the metals industries and in those processing agricultural goods, the nature of the business executive's work became increasingly routine and administrative.

When the internal situation had become bureaucratic, the external one tended to be oligopolistic. Vertical integration by one manufacturer forced others to follow. Thus, in a very short time, many American industries became dominated by a few large firms, with the smaller ones handling local and more specialized aspects of the business. Occasionally industries like oil, tobacco, and sugar, came to be controlled by one company, but in most cases legal action by the federal government in the years after 1900 turned monopolistic industries into oligopolistic ones.

Costs, rather than interfirm competition, began to determine prices. With better information on costs, supplies, and market conditions, the companies were able to determine price quite accurately on the basis of the desired return on investment. The managers of the different major companies had little to gain by cutting prices below an acceptable profit margin. On the other hand, if one firm set its prices excessively high, the other firms could increase their share of the market by selling at a lower price and still maintain a profit. They would, however, rarely cut to the point where this margin was eliminated. As a result, after 1900, price leadership, price umbrellas, and other evidences of oligopolistic competition became common in many American industries. To increase their share of the market and to improve their profit position, the large corporations therefore concerned themselves

³⁰ Hidys, *Pioneering in Big Business*, chap. 3 and pp. 323-388.

less with price and concentrated more on obtaining new customers by advertising, brand names, and product differentiations; on cutting costs through further improvement and integration of the manufacturing, marketing, and buying process; and on developing more diversified lines of products.

The coming of the large vertically integrated corporation changed more than just the practices of American industrialists and their industries. The effect on the merchant, particularly the wholesaler, and on the financier, especially the investment banker, has been suggested here. The relation between the growth of these great industrial units and the rise of labor unions has often been pointed out. Certainly the regulation of the large corporation became one of the major political issues of these years, and the devices created to carry out such a regulation were significant innovations in American constitutional, legal, and political institutions. But an examination of such effects is beyond the scope of this paper.

Reasons for the Basic Innovations

One question remains to be reviewed. Why did the vertically integrated corporation come when it did, and in the way it did? The creation by nearly all the large firms of nation-wide selling and distributing organizations indicates the importance of the national market. It was necessary that the market be an increasingly urban one. The city took the largest share of the goods manufactured by the processors of agricultural products. The city, too, with its demands for construction materials, lighting, heating and many other facilities, provided the major market for the metals and other producers' goods industries after railroad construction slowed. Without the rapidly growing urban market there would have been little need and little opportunity for the coming of big business in American industry. And such a market could hardly have existed before the completion of a nation-wide railroad network.

What other reasons might there have been for the swift growth of the great industrial corporation? What about foreign markets? In some industries, particularly oil, the overseas trade may have been an important factor. However, in most businesses the domestic customers took the lion's share of the output, and in nearly all of them the move abroad appears to have come after the creation of the large corporation, and after such corporations had fashioned their domestic marketing organization.

What about the investor looking for profitable investments, and the promoter seeking new promotions? Financiers and promoters certainly had an impact on the changes after 1897, but again they seem primarily to have taken advantage of what had already proved successful. The industrialists

themselves, rather than the financiers, initiated most of the major changes in business organization. Availability of capital and cooperation with the financier figured much less prominently in these industrial combinations and consolidations than had been the case with the earlier construction of the railroads and with the financing of the Civil War.

What about technological changes? Actually, except for electricity, the major innovations in the metals industries seem to have come before or after the years under study here. Most of the technological improvements in the agricultural processing industries appear to have been made to meet the demands of the new urban market. The great technological innovations that accompanied the development of electricity, the internal combustion engine, and industrial chemistry did have their beginning in these years, and were, indeed, to have a fundamental impact on the American business economy. Yet this impact was not to be really felt until after 1900.

What about entrepreneurial talent? Certainly the best-known entrepreneurs of this period were those who helped to create the large industrial corporation. If, as Joseph A. Schumpeter suggests, "The defining characteristic [of the entrepreneur and his function] is simply the doing of new things, and doing things that are already done, in a new way (innovation)," Rockefeller, Carnegie, Frick, Swift, Duke, McCormick, the DuPonts, the Guggenheims, Coffin of General Electric, Preston of United Fruit, and Clark of Singer Sewing Machine were all major innovators of their time.³¹ And their innovations were not in technology, but rather in organization and in marketing. "Doing a new thing," is, to Schumpeter a "creative response" to a new situation, and the situation to which these innovators responded appears to have been the rise of the national urban market.

There must be an emphasis here on the words "seem" and "appear." The framework used is a preliminary one and the datum itself, based on readily available printed material rather than on business records is hardly as detailed or accurate as could be desired. More data, more precise and explicit questions, and other types and ranges of questions will modify the generalizations suggested here. For the moment, however, I would like to suggest, if only to encourage the raising of questions and the further compilation and analysis of data, that *the* major innovation in the American economy between the 1880's and the turn of the century was the creation of the great corporations in American industry. This innovation, as I have tried to show, was a response to the growth of a national and increasingly urban market that was created by the building of a national railroad network — the dy-

³¹ Joseph A. Schumpeter, "The Creative Response in Economic History," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. VII (May, 1947), p. 151, and also his *Theory of Economic Development*, trans. Redvers Opie (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 74-94.

dynamic force in the economy in the quarter century before 1880. After 1900 the newly modified methods of interfirm and intrafirm administration remained relatively unchanged (as did the location of major markets and sources of raw materials) except in those industries directly affected by new sources of power and the systematic application of science to industry. In the twentieth century electricity, the internal combustion engine, and systematic, institutionalized research and development took the place of the national urban market as the dynamic factor in the American industrial economy.³²

TABLE I. *The Fifty Largest Industrials*
(Numbers indicate relative size according to 1909 assets)

CONSUMERS' GOODS COMPANIES

Agricultural Processing

3. Am. Tobacco
8. Armour & Co.
9. American Sugar
13. Swift & Co.
30. Nat'l. Biscuit
33. Distillers' Securities
50. United Fruit

Extractive

2. Standard Oil
26. Va.-Carolina Chem.
35. American Agri. Chem.

Manufacturing

4. Int'l. Harvester
10. U.S. Rubber
12. Singer Mfg. Co.

PRODUCERS' GOODS COMPANIES

Agricultural Processing

6. Central Leather
18. Corn Products Co.
21. Am. Woolens

Extractive

1. U.S. Steel
5. Amalgamated
(Anaconda) Copper
11. Am. Smelting &
Refining
14. Pittsburgh Coal
17. Colo. Fuel & Iron
20. Lackawanna
23. Consolidation Coal
25. Republic Steel
27. Intl. Paper
28. Bethlehem Steel
31. Cambria Steel
33. Associated Oil
34. Calumet & Hecla
37. Crucible Steel
38. Lake Superior Corp.
39. U.S. Smelting & Ref.
40. United Copper
41. National Lead
42. Phelps Dodge
43. Lehigh Coal
45. Jones & Laughlin
48. Am. Writing Paper
49. Copper Range

Manufacturing

7. Pullman
15. Gen. Elec.
16. Am. Car. & Foundry
19. Am. Can
22. Westinghouse
24. DuPont
29. Am. Locomotive
36. Allis-Chalmers
44. Int. Steam Pump
46. Western Electric

³² This point has only been considered briefly here, but has been developed at some length in my "Development, Diversification and Decentralization," to be published in a book of essays tentatively titled *The Postwar American Economy* under the sponsorship of the Department of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

4

THE RELIGIOUS THEME IN AMERICAN THOUGHT

"It is a commonplace," Sidney Mead says in an earlier article, "that in the period roughly from 1870 to 1900 evangelical Protestant Christianity largely dominated the American culture, setting the prevailing mores and the moral standards by which personal and public, individual and group, conduct was judged." ["American Protestantism Since the Civil War. I. From Denominationalism to Americanism," *Journal of Religion*, XXXVI (Jan. 1956).] Dr. Mead argues, however, that "domination" was possible only because of the amalgamation of "scholastic Protestant orthodoxy" with "the religion of the democratic society and nation . . . articulated in terms of the destiny of America, under God, to be fulfilled by perfecting the democratic way of life for the example and betterment of all mankind." In effect, by the latter part of the 19th century, Protestantism had become little more than a sanctimonious justification for the status quo with almost no independent intellectual content. Three developments had served to emasculate Protestant theology: (1) the triumph of pietistic revivalism in the denominations following the Revolution; (2) "the almost universal reaction in the free churches against the whole ethos of the Enlightenment"; and (3) "the lack of intellectual interests and structure of the pietistic Protestantism which came to dominance." Thus, Protestantism [Mead approvingly quotes John Herman Randall, Jr.] "tended to become largely an emotional force in support of the reigning secular social ideals."

It is difficult for us today to understand just how potent a force Protestantism was at the turn of the century. Within it lay the often inarticulate but fundamental assumptions about original sin, the demonstrable harmony of God's purpose, and the natural hierarchy of men based upon their relative morality. The assumptions set the contemporary definitions of truth and evil, justice and injustice. They were shared, moreover, by Catholic orthodoxy as well, though Catholic thought rejected evangelical Protestantism's identification of the course of American democracy with God's purpose.

The assumptions were manifested in the expressed attitudes toward women and children, to say nothing of *sotto voce* attitudes toward the lower classes. Children no less than adults were held responsible for the good works that indicated the reception of grace; they were, however, morally incomplete and thus vulnerable to the devil's tempta-

tions; and so they must be disciplined, by punishment as well as by labor that should divert their energies from doing the devil's work. Women were regarded in much the same manner, though as adults they might be humored rather than disciplined or worked — but kept in their place in any event. As for the poor, their very poverty proved their moral incapacity — especially in this, God's own country. "The truth," averred Henry Ward Beecher, is that "no man in this land suffers from poverty unless it be more than his fault — unless it be his *sin*." [See Mead, below.] Not only did America provide a special opportunity for men to test their mettle, but, as Episcopal Bishop William Lawrence put it even more generally: "In the long run, it is only to the men of morality that wealth comes. We believe in the harmony of God's Universe. . . . We . . . occasionally see the wicked prosper, but only occasionally." ["The Relationship of Wealth to Morals," *World's Work*, I (Jan. 1901).]

If, as Mr. Mead notes, Henry Adams lamented in 1900 that he felt like an alien in the America he had once called his own, at least the dominant elements of Adams' America in 1900 still used essentially the same thought constellations and the same criteria for "truth" and "evil" as his illustrious ancestors had done even a hundred years earlier. Religious, especially Protestant, principles remained the key. Adams was a perceptive man who noted the moral revolution of his day brought on by the high level of social mobility, philosophical controversy, and political change. Adams himself had hailed Darwinism as a "substitute for religion," while the pronounced increase in social violence during the last decades of the 19th century had put conventional normative definitions to severe pragmatic tests. But for most contemporaries, the revolution was only a challenge still inchoate and repressible. As late as 1912, Henry May has observed, "words like truth, justice, patriotism, unselfishness, and decency were used constantly without any sense of embarrassment, and ordinarily without any suggestion that their meaning might be only of a time and place." Most Americans, moreover, "did not argue about the essential morality of the universe — they assumed it." [*The End of American Innocence* (1959) 9, 14.]

Unless it is understood how much the norms of 1900 owed to the prevailing religious notions, the statements of some leading spokesman for the America of the turn of the century often appear merely fatuous. Perhaps the most notorious example is that of George F. Baer, the mining tycoon, in his reply to a criticism of his company's stand in the coal strike of 1902. "I do not know who you are," Baer wrote to the remonstrator. "I see that you are a religious man. . . . I beg you not to be discouraged. The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for — not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of this country." Although George Baer may well have been a fatuous man, his self-arrogated stewardship was commonplace in his day. It was not the archaism of the sentiment so

much as the timing and phrasing of his letter (which he certainly did not expect would be made public) that evoked the contemporary uproar and helped make him the butt of historians' derision. [Cf. E. C. Kirkland, "The Robber Barons Revisited," *American Historical Review*, LXVI (Oct. 1960).]

It was in fact an old Calvinist notion that God rewarded his elect with earthly gifts of money or power, and that the ascendant classes must serve as God's "stewards." It was a belief that leading progressives (most obviously Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson) shared fully with the apologists for the status quo. The belief helps explain the moral dogmatism and the underlying elitism of so much of progressive thought. It helps also to explain the bitter dismay among so many of the progressives following the collapse of the movement after the War: the people, it seemed, would not be led, would not be uplifted, would not be *right*; the people be damned.

The power of evangelical Protestantism remained great in the 1920's. Religious fundamentalism was its chief manifestation. Prohibitionism and nativism, two of the most striking phenomena of the 'twenties, owed much to it, as did the Ku Klux Klan [see Evans, pp. 385ff.]. In many ways, these movements represented the terminal efforts of a progressive society to maintain fixed standards of value. Their inevitable failure forced American Protestantism to re-examine its tenets, and to become transformed, as Professor Mead puts it, "from Americanism to Christianity."

H. R. Niebuhr's "Fundamentalism," in *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, is a brief but highly informative account that should not be overlooked. Among the many works cited in Mr. Mead's article, below, students should see especially P. Carter's *The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel* (1954).

American Protestantism Since the Civil War

II. *From Americanism to Christianity*

SIDNEY E. MEAD

In the preceding article we described a metamorphosis of Protestantism in the United States, exemplified in its ideological amalgamation with "Americanism." In America this was still a period of "fervent devotion," but the object of devotion has been subtly changed under the appearance of enlargement to include a particular system of social, political, and economic

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life. "In ages of fervent devotion," Tocqueville noted, "men sometimes abandon their religion, but they only shake it off to adopt another. Their faith changes the objects to which it is directed, but it suffers no decline."¹ This was the kind of change we have described. Hence there was no outward appearance of decline in religious activities or denominational prosperity. Indeed, contemporary statistical studies suggested a period of organizational vitality and exceptional growth, during which the denominations were rapidly bringing the unchurched into their folds. For this reason the rightness of the general outlook and practice seemed to pass the pragmatic test — the system worked, as serious and able students like Daniel Dorchester took pains to point out.²

Nevertheless, the ideological amalgamation of Protestant denominationalism and Americanism went on. The situation was not untouched with irony, since, while the Protestant denominations remained very conscious of the evils due to a formal connection between church and state as demonstrated in history, they were rendered by circumstances described in the preceding article less critically conscious of the equally grave evils contingent upon ideological amalgamation with a particular way of life. Hence, while abhorring Erastianism and being skeptical of theocracy — in their overt forms — the free churches eventually found themselves entangled in a more subtle form of identification of Christianity, nationalism, and economic system than Christendom had ever known before.

Not unnaturally, a crisis in the life of the denomination resulted when events occurred that were spectacular and explosive enough to raise the question in many minds of the adequacy of the current conceptual order and of the modes of practice. It is clear that the crisis, of which we speak in this article, was a matter of both the denominationalism and the Americanism, which ideologically had achieved such a high degree of amalgamation. We may take, as a text for the discussion of this development, the simple thesis of A. M. Schlesinger, Sr., that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century organized religion in America met two great challenges — "the one to its system of thought, the other to its social program."³

¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve (4th ed.; New York: J. & H. G. Langley, 1841), I, 341.

² Daniel Dorchester, *The Problem of Religious Progress* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1881), see particularly chap. iii and the Appendix containing "Ecclesiastical Statistics."

³ A. M. Schlesinger, Sr., "A critical Period in American Protestantism, 1875-1900," in *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, LXIV (June, 1932) (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), p. 140. The questions, said Brown, are: "Can the old religion still maintain itself under the strain of the new conditions? Can it sustain the theoretical test of the intellectual movement which we call modern science? Can it meet the practical test of the social and economic movement which we call industrialism, with its political counterpart in the rivalry of races and of nations for prestige and for power?" These, he suggests, are aspects of the same scientific movement.

The challenge to the "system of thought" in the denominations was spearheaded by the persuasive sway of evolutionary thinking, appearing first in the work of Darwin and Spencer and soon pervading all areas of intellectual life. The challenge to the "social program" of the denominations came first in the form of unbearable conditions in the expanding industrial cities and then in a series of spectacular upheavals that shook the social and economic structure to its foundations.

It is important to note that these two challenges, which threatened completely to shatter both the ideological and the practical worlds of the denominations, were concurrent. In this perspective the wonder is not that there was a great deal of confusion, inanity, and hysteria but that as much sanity and order prevailed in them as actually did, so that one of the most thorough students of the era can conclude that "during this period of recurrent depression, doubt and struggle the Protestant churches still maintained, to a greater extent than is usually realized, their historic position of intellectual and moral leadership."⁴

I

The social program of the denominations was firmly rooted in the long Christian tradition of "charity" — the amelioration of distress, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and giving the cup of cold water for Jesus' sake and not the titillation of human pride. The ideal in this respect was "the man of feeling . . . the feeling of the renewed heart, enlarged as is the range of human wretchedness, purified by the indwelling Spirit of God, and ennobled by the model on which it is formed," as two Scotch ministers wrote of the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely in 1829.⁵

But the exercise of Christian charity came to be hemmed in and conditioned by current modes of thinking. In the first place, it was to be exercised wisely, which meant with a realistic understanding of what Horace Bushnell called "those higher laws" of trade — for example, "the laws of current price," which automatically set the price of "the productions of agriculture" as well as "the wages of hand labor."⁶ These laws were thought to be immutable, and hence, as the Rev. John Bascom of Williams College explained in 1868 in arguing against eight-hour-day legislation, any attempt to interfere in the interests of abstract justice or the amelioration of distress

⁴ Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1949), p. ix.

⁵ Ezra Stiles Ely, *Visits of Mercy; or the Journals of the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely* (6th ed., revised by the author; Philadelphia: Samuel F. Bradford, 1829), I, iii.

⁶ Horace Bushnell, "How To Be a Christian in Trade," in *Sermons on Living Subjects* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 251.

was to attempt "a substitution of civil for natural law" and to demonstrate "the impossibility of affecting favorably or shifting the conditions of society except in connection with the forces that give rise to them."⁷

Recognizing this, Bushnell continued that "the merchant . . . should do his trade by the strict law principles of trade, and never let his operations be mixed up with charities." Hence his two ideal merchants

were never known to veer by a hair from integrity in any transaction of business, but they would have veered a hundred times a day, falling into a muddle where all distinctions of principle are lost, if they had not done their trade as trade, under the laws of trade, and reserved their charities — all their sympathies, allowances, mitigations, merciful accommodations — for a separate chapter of life.⁸

Andrew Carnegie, in his famous article on "Wealth," intimated clearly enough that to pay higher wages than the market demanded in an effort to distribute wealth more equitably was just such a mistaken mixing of trade and charity and violated the rich man's responsibility to administer his wealth "for the community far better than it could or would have done for itself."⁹

In this view he was backed by the "natural theology" of Professor Bascom, who held that, while ultimately "selfishness" will be "steadily softened into a just and generous regard of the good of others," meanwhile the only "basis of simple justice, of pure economic right, and . . . the only one on which the claims of all parties can find firm, constant, and conclusive adjustment" is that of "sharp competition, of a stern and unscrupulous use of the advantages which the market affords." Therefore, for example, "if a workman wishes higher wages than the employer is willing to pay, he has but one test of the validity of his claim . . . and that is his ability to secure elsewhere the sum demanded." This, he explained, "is commercial law, commercial justice, a practical and final decision of all questions, beyond which there is the opportunity for no claim, as there is for no coercion."¹⁰

Under these rubrics Carnegie castigated the "writer of philosophic books" who confessed that he had given a quarter "to a man who approached him as he was coming to visit the house of a friend." This, thought Carnegie, was a flagrant example of "indiscriminate charity" and was probably "one of the

⁷ John Bascom, "The Natural Theology of Social Science. IV. Labor and Capital," *Bibliotheca sacra*, XXV (October, 1868), 680, 683.

⁸ Bushnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 263, 248.

⁹ The article appeared in the *North American Review*, CXLVIII (June, 1889), 653-64. For convenience I have used it as reprinted in Gail Kennedy (ed.), *Democracy and the Gospel of Wealth* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1949), a volume in the Amherst College "Problems in American Civilization Series." The quotation is from p. 8.

¹⁰ Bascom, *op. cit.*, p. 675.

most selfish and very worst actions" of this man's generally "worthy" life.¹¹ The Rev. Charles Wood was even more dogmatic than Carnegie. He was convinced that "begging on the streets, and from door to door, is a *habit*, acquired after an experience of its success. . . . In nine cases out of ten there is no pressure of want at all." Rather, "it is prompted by a low, indolent spirit, which seeks to gratify its selfish lusts, at the expense of the virtuous and good." Furthermore, he added, revealing a widespread prejudice, "four-fifths, if not nine-tenths, of all our street beggars and paupers are of one nationality and of one form of religion." Therefore, he argued, "street begging should be made an offence in the eyes of the law, and should be strictly visited by a suitable penalty."¹²

In the second place, the exercise of charity was limited and conditioned by the prevalent view that since "Godliness is in league with riches," most poverty is the direct result of vice and sin. Hence Carnegie was convinced that "in alms-giving more injury is probably done by rewarding vice than by relieving virtue," and his "true reformer" was "as careful and as anxious not to aid the unworthy as he [was] to aid the worthy."¹³

These views also had clerical approval in high places. Henry Ward Beecher thought that, while "there may be reasons of poverty which do not involve wrong," nevertheless, "looking comprehensively through city and town and village and country, the general truth will stand, that no man in this land suffers from poverty unless it be more than his fault — unless it be his *sin*." Happily, he added, "there is enough and to spare thrice over; and if men have not enough, it is owing to the want of provident care, and foresight, and industry, and frugality, and wise saving. This is the general truth."¹⁴ In 1873 the reviewer of Charles Loring Brace's *The Dangerous Classes of New York* . . . in the *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, commented that "in this city . . . as a general rule, poverty comes from vice, rather than vice from poverty,"¹⁵ while the Rev. Charles Wood, writing in the same *Quarterly* a year later, was positive that "pauperism and vagrancy are *crimes*, and should be *prevented or punished*." And, he added, "it is even doubtful whether the indirect *injury* done by our voluntary, benevolent associations, and 'missions for the relief of the poor' . . . does not overbalance the good which they accomplish." For, he continued, perhaps with a tinge of professional jealousy, "the only institutions, or organ-

¹¹ Carnegie, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹² Charles Wood, "The Pauperism of Our Cities: Its Character, Condition, Causes, and Relief," *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, III (new ser.; April, 1874), 225.

¹³ Carnegie, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Henry Ward Beecher, "Economy in Small Things," in *Plymouth Pulpit*, IV (March–September, 1875) (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1892), 463–64.

¹⁵ *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, II (January, 1873), 189.

ized societies" which can insure the punishment or prevention of vagrancy and pauperism are the "divine institutions" of "the family, the *church* and the state," and "all other institutions should be associated with and subordinated to these." Only "good homes, pure churches, and well administered laws, will either prevent or punish the crimes of our lowest classes."¹⁶

John Bascom was made of even sterner stuff. "The staple with which Providence has to deal with in the races of men," he pontificated, "is ignorance and indolence interstratified with sin — stupidity made heavy, solid, opaque, and gritty with a wicked will" until

the unpliant and stubborn mass can only be broken and ground and reformed by the strongest and harshest of machinery. Unpitying poverty, absolute and severe want, must be allowed to force action, to sharpen instincts, to strengthen the will. War and pestilence must winnow the feeble races, lest they swarm in vile, unprofitable life.

Hence "God's method," with which Bascom seemed to be completely familiar, is the "melancholy work of scourging on the backs of the blind and perverse," and wisdom recognizes that "the loitering, unambitious poor still reserve for themselves the lash of necessity, are checked in increase . . . by hardship and disease, and left under the severe hand of physical law," which treats them "according to the dulness and sin that is in them." Hence

outside philanthropy finds itself in the dilemma of either robbing intelligence and industry of their reward . . . or of casting off the unworthy, hemming them in once more to the fruits of their folly, till the bitterness of sin shall aid in working its cure, and help to create an appetite for something better.

How foolish, he concluded, for "hasty philanthropy" to try to "undo by a trick of management and new relations the work of sin, and unbind its heavy burdens."¹⁷

Thus Christian charity came to be incased in a hard shell of sanctified realism that sought to protect it from foolishness. Nevertheless, the sheer existence of conditions in the growing industrial cities¹⁸ increasingly constituted a challenge to human decency as well as to Christian conscience, which made its impact. Walter Rauschenbusch, who apparently went to the Second German Baptist Church on West Forty-fifth Street in New York in 1886 to save individual souls, there found himself confronted with "the endless procession of men 'out of work, out of clothes, out of shoes, and out of hope,' that wore down the threshold and wore away the hearts of the

¹⁶ Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁷ Bascom, *op. cit.*; the quotations, in order, are from pp. 659, 662, 658.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Wood, *op. cit.*, 218-19. For a contemporary account see May, *op. cit.*, chapter on "The Face of the City," pp. 112-24.

sensitive young pastor and his wife." And no doubt this experience put him in a receptive mood to be awakened "to the world of social problems" by Henry George,¹⁹ who was reminding the clergy that kindness, generosity, and other amiable virtues were no longer sufficient — that "what is needed is justice."²⁰

In this situation and while at the same time the denominations were rapidly becoming "middle-class" in outlook and constituency, their social program was also challenged by the obvious loss of working people. This was a fact that could not be ignored, and many church leaders became concerned about it. "We make the statement without fear of contradiction, and therefore without apology," said Charles Wood in 1874, "that the poor are not provided for, nor are they wanted as a part of the congregations which worship in the majority of our city churches." And "this indifference," he thought, "taken in connection with that of the poor themselves to their own spiritual instruction, only shows the pitiable condition in which they are placed."²¹ Even Henry Ward Beecher, although less obviously perturbed by it, recognized in 1874 that in "the average churches in New York and Brooklyn, from Murray Hill downward . . . it will be found that the aristocratic and prosperous elements have possession of them, and if the great under-class, the poor and needy, go to them at all, they go sparsely, and not as to a home." And, he added with surprising candor, "our churches are largely for the mutual insurance of prosperous families, and not for the upbuilding of the great under-class of humanity."²²

Out of these factors created by the rise of great industrial cities came the many movements of charity and philanthropy and definite attempts to appeal to workers which are delineated so well by Aaron I. Abell in his study of *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900*.²³ City rescue missions, homes of various kinds, the Salvation Army, the Volunteers of America, institutional churches, and a host of other instruments for meeting the situation were devised and grew apace. And these, in turn, had their effect. The efforts expended through them were somewhat successful in alleviating distress but were more important in holding significant numbers of the workers. And the urban workers who were won and retained exerted an influence in the churches, since, as Abell says, "the wage-earning masses expected religion to establish ultimately a more equitable economic and in-

¹⁹ Charles Howard Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 216, 217.

²⁰ May, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

²¹ Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

²² Henry Ward Beecher, "Liberty in the Churches," *Plymouth Pulpit*, II (March-September, 1874) (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1896), 209.

²³ Aaron I. Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943).

dustrial order.”²⁴ And this, in turn, bolstered the emerging concern for social justice.

Nevertheless, as Henry May notes, “until they were shocked by a series of violent social conflicts, most Protestant spokesmen continued to insist that all was well.” Until then, by those standing on the teleological escalator of progress, “greed at the top could be ignored or accepted as a tool of progress,” while “misery at the bottom could be waved aside as inevitable or, at most, treated by a program of guarded and labeled philanthropy.”²⁵

The upheavals which challenged the magnificently complacent outlook of the period came out of the discontent smoldering in agriculture and labor. Speaking broadly, the woes of the farmer were attributable to the rapid industrialization of the country, with the attendant ascendance of a “business” mentality and the lure of “business-like” practices. This is the situation which a textbook writer discusses in the aptly titled chapter, “Capitalism Captures the Farmer,” in which, after picturing the farmers’ plight, he concludes that “in the placid language of economics this was marginal living; in the realistic language of life it meant futility and desperation.”²⁶ Hamlin Garland, that exemplification of the sons of “the middle border” in revolt, used such realistic language in dedicating his *Main Travelled Roads*, published in 1891, to “my father and mother whose half century of pilgrimage on the main travelled road has brought them only pain and weariness.” Out of the “pain and weariness,” the “futility and desperation,” came the somewhat mild and sporadic movements of “revolt” — the Grange movement (Patrons of Husbandry) of 1867 and following; Greenbackism in the middle of the seventies; the Farmers’ Alliance movement following 1880; the merging of these movements in Populism (the Peoples’ party) in 1891; and their final culmination in merger with the Bryan Democrats for the great “free-silver” campaign of 1896.

But Protestant spokesmen, as revealed in the religious press, actually gave these “manifestations of farmer unrest” relatively little attention. No doubt this was largely because their attention was centered upon the more spectacular uprisings of labor. The Bureau of Labor reported 23,798 strikes in the nineteen years from 1881 to 1900, involving 6,610,000 workers in 132,442 plants. Four of these strikes were particularly explosive and rocked the social structure to its foundations. First, the railroad strikes in 1877 — called by the author of *Raintree County* “another Sumpter” — which spread out over the Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the New York Central.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

²⁵ May, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

²⁶ Lowenberg, in Ray A. Billington, Bert J. Loewenberg, and Samuel H. Brockunier, *The United States: American Democracy in World Perspective* (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1947), p. 358; hereafter cited as “B. L. & B.”

Pitched battles involving workers, police, militia, and federal troops were fought in many cities; property damage was immense, and sober men had visions of mobocracy and revolution. Second was the "Haymarket affair" in Chicago. In a clash between pickets and police at the McCormick Harvester Plant early in May, 1886, six of the former were killed and several wounded. At a protest meeting held the following day in Haymarket Square a bomb was thrown which killed eight policemen and injured twenty-seven persons. The trial, which resulted in seven "anarchists" being condemned to death (four were hanged, one committed suicide, two were given life-imprisonment), revealed widespread alarm bordering on hysteria. Third was the great strike at the Carnegie Steel Plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania, in 1892, during which a battle between three hundred Pinkerton "detectives" and workers resulted in ten deaths and sixty wounded. This strike was finally ended only when eight thousand state militia were called out. Fourth was the great strike at the Pullman Palace Car Company in 1894, when President Cleveland — over the protests of Governor Altgeld of Illinois — sent two thousand federal troops to "guard the mails," and the injunction was effectively used against the unions. Henry May holds that "no strike had so alarmed the middle-class public"²⁷ — perhaps this was because the strikers cut their Pullman cars out of the trains.

Meanwhile, the depression of 1893 gripped the country — "in many ways . . . the most serious challenge of American political and economic institutions between the Civil War and the depression of 1929-37."²⁸ It was "a black year . . . with thousands upon thousands out of work, and want, and suffering and hopelessness to be seen everywhere." Revolution was scented when "bands of unemployed, of which 'General' Jacob S. Coxey's 'army' is the best known, descended upon Washington seeking redress and relief."²⁹

Religious leaders were ideologically prepared, after a fashion, to meet even such unprecedented upheavals in the nation. Regarding strikes, John Bascom had argued that, while they represent "the simple assertion of a right" and therefore "cannot be condemned on moral and commercial grounds," yet they are "rarely necessary," because "the causes which justify a rise of wages will usually, by the inevitable laws of trade, quietly secure the result." Therefore, in those cases where "the clamor becomes loud and the measures violent," this fact alone is almost sufficient to mark "the absence . . . in the relation of the parties, of those grounds which render the claim just."³⁰ And in the midst of the troubles of 1893, Andrew Preston Peabody, who taught ethics and religion at Harvard, dismissed labor organizations with the

²⁷ May, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²⁹ B. L. & B., p. 450.

³⁰ Bascom, *op. cit.*, p. 678.

remark: "That they are tolerated in what pretends to be a free country, or by any government less barbarous than that of Dahomey or Ashantee, is to me an unsolvable mystery."³¹

We are not surprised to note that men of such preparation reacted first with amazement, hurt, and fear and cried out for the suppression of the "mobs." Not untypical were the comments of the *Christian Union* in 1877: "There are times when mercy is a mistake, and this is one of them," and the hysterical outburst of the *Independent*:

If the club of the policeman, knocking out the brains of the rioter, will answer, then well and good; but if it does not promptly meet the exigency, then bullets and bayonets, canister and grape — with no sham or pretense, in order to frighten men, but with fearful and destructive reality — constitute the one remedy and the one duty of the hour. . . . Napoleon was right when he said that the way to deal with a mob was to exterminate it.

And as late as 1892 a writer in the *Christian Advocate* thought that the duty of "every patriot" was to "hope for the best, and say only those words which will tend to the maintenance of law," and meanwhile, "if he has any abstract theories for bettering the human race, this is no time to ventilate them."³²

But by that time many religious leaders were already deeply troubled. "In the darkest hours of the Civil War," said a writer in the *New York Christian Advocate* in 1886, "we never felt more sober than today."³³ Even John Bascom had noted in 1868 that in the contest between capital and labor "employers, frequently few in number, can easily come to a tacit understanding without attracting public attention, and steadily resist the natural forces which are tending to press up the price of labor," while "the workmen, on the contrary . . . feel keenly the immediate necessity of continuing labor on the best terms they can make."³⁴ Hence, he had argued, "on

³¹ Andrew Preston Peabody, "Wealth," *Andover Review*, XIX (May, 1893), 329. The September, 1877, issue of the *North American Review* carried an article by Thomas A. Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railway Company, entitled "The Recent Strikes" (CXXV, 351-62). Speaking of the railroad strikes in terms such as "a mob," "riot, arson, and bloodshed," and "insurrection" and arguing that "the conduct of the rioters is entirely inconsistent with the idea that this movement could have been directed by serious, right-minded men bent on improving the condition of the laboring classes," Mr. Scott suggested, first, the use of the injunction and, second, the systematic disposal of federal troops throughout the nation (pp. 359-61). The same issue (pp. 322-26) also carried an anonymous article signed "A Striker," and entitled "Fair Wages." Unlike the handling of the Scott article, the editor appended the following (p. 326): "Note. — In this case, as in all others, the Editor disclaims responsibility for the opinions of contributors, whether their articles are signed or anonymous."

³² These quotations from the *Christian Union*, the *Independent*, and the *Christian Advocate* are taken from May, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93, 105.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³⁴ Bascom, *op. cit.*, p. 678.

any sudden inflation of prices laborers are sure to be relatively the losers," and, indeed, "in the years of [the Civil] war . . . profits in most branches of manufacture were very unusual; while the advance of wages, though considerable, by no means kept pace with the prices"; and hence "the condition of workmen became, and remains, more trying than before."

The first reaction of the editors of the *Congregationalist* to "The Strike at Homestead" was to compare the owners' hiring "the Pinkerton men . . . to shoot the strikers" to "lynchers . . . taking the law into their own hands" because "impatient of the slow processes of justice." Further, "some legal requirement and provision of arbitration" is "absolutely necessary," they argued, because "these great business enterprises, employing many thousands of men and affecting widely the interests of the people . . . are not merely private property." Therefore, the "skilled workmen" at Homestead "cannot rightly be dispossessed of their positions by mere arbitrary conditions imposed by their employers," any more than "a great corporation [can] be rightfully blocked in carrying on its business by the arbitrary demands of labor organizations."³⁵

In the September, 1892, issue, the editors of the *Andover Review*, commenting on "the tragic events at Homestead," held that while "law and order" must be given "immediate and absolute precedence," nevertheless, "the maintenance of order in congested labor districts is not the settlement of the labor question." The question of the day, they continued, is that of the "personal rights in equity in the plant which the men had contributed so much to build up by their skill and character." For, contrary to Carnegie's "benevolent millionairism," the growth and "reputation of the Carnegie works . . . are due, not simply to the energy and business sagacity of the owners, not simply the enterprise in the managers, not simply to improved machinery, but equally to the cooperation of the skilled workmen employed." And while it may be legal, it just isn't equitable "whenever a question of work or wage arises, for the management to say, if you don't like the place you can quit."

Hence, the editors concluded, "there can be no further progress in the adjustment of labor and capital, and no permanent safety for the wage sys-

³⁵ *Congregationalist*, LXXVII (July 14, 1892), 224, col. 4. In fairness it should be noted that on the first page of the same issue (p. 221, col. 6), the editors condemned the views allegedly expressed by Senator Palmer of Illinois as "nationalistic," and thought that, if enforced upon capital by law, they would "cause . . . temporary, if not permanent, disaster." Palmer was reputed to have said that "hereafter manufacturing establishments will have to be regarded as semipublic property, their owners to be regarded as holding the property subject to the correlative rights of those without whose services the property would be valueless. Laboring men are conscious of the right to continuous employment during good behavior. They will insist upon it. If employers have the right to hold over the heads of their employes the rod of dismissal American freedom will be gone."

tem, as the method of industrialism, until these rights in equity are in some way acknowledged." And unless they are, "the wage system will certainly and justly lose its place as the accredited method of industrial business, and something will be devised which will express in larger degree than wages the interest of labor in the means and agencies of production." Finally, the editors muttered, in what sounds like a threat, if management continues to insist upon "legal rights" in the wage system "against rights in equity, the appeal will be taken to politics, and the appeal of industrialism to politics is the first and a long step toward State Socialism."³⁶ Here, then, were emerging cogent criticisms of the existing American way of life based on a rejection of some of the most sacred doctrines of the "gospel of wealth."

So far as the Protestant denominations were concerned, the significance of the great social upheavals was that they forced in many minds consideration of the question of the adequacy of "charity" as then understood and interpreted, either to guide the social program of the free churches or to suggest ways to meet the vast new problems of the industrialized civilization. "Do I mean to say that Christian philanthropy is a failure?" asked Charles Worcester Clark in an article published posthumously in 1893.³⁷ "Certainly not; only that the time has come earnestly to consider whether its field ought not to be extended so as to cover the cause of the evils it is already doing so much to alleviate." "Charity," he explained, "whether public or private, mainly deals with results, to mitigate effects; public action must be applied to the industrial system itself, in order to prevent a continuation of their causes." In brief, "our philanthropy must concern itself not only with private helpfulness, but with public reform and economic reorganization." This, he thought, will be objected to as "wholly unprecedented" by those who "do not even try to solve the social problem, save in the same old way," but "I merely contend that, in view of the industrial revolution wrought by science and invention during the past century, the burden of proof rests on those who maintain that the old ways are sufficient under the new conditions, no less than on those who demand a change."

In this general context we are better able to understand the great gulf between the views of John Bascom and Henry Ward Beecher and those of

³⁶ "The Impending Question in the Industrial World," *Andover Review*, XVIII (September, 1892), 272-78.

³⁷ Charles W. Clark, "Applied Christianity: Who Shall Apply It First?" *Andover Review*, XIX (January, 1893), 20, 23, 24, 25. The editor, noting that the author "died in 1891, at the age of twenty-seven," held the article to be "typical of the aim of the better mind of his generation as the more earnest of our younger men are seeking to interpret Christianity to themselves and to their time." In the May issue, the *Review* carried an article by A. P. Peabody entitled "Wealth" (see n. 31) which has the appearance of being conceived by the author as a reply to Clark's article. Peabody is described in the recent history of the Harvard Divinity School as "a sage Unitarian . . . defender of a conservative version of the Liberal Faith."

Francis Greenwood Peabody, professor of Christian morals at conservative Harvard, who in 1900 in a book called *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, argued that "the social question of the present age is not a question of mitigating the evils of the existing order, but a question whether the existing order itself shall last. It is not so much a problem of social amelioration which occupies the modern mind, as a problem of social transformation and reconstruction." The demands, he continued, are "not patronage, but justice; not the general distribution of superfluous wealth, but the righteous restitution of wealth to those who have created it."³⁸ This indicates a mood or temper widely prevalent at the turn of the century, which is in sharp contrast to the prevailing ideology of the seventies and eighties, wherein Protestant Christianity was largely amalgamated with the outlook of the burgeoning acquisitive society. It suggests the emergence of the so-called "social-gospel" movement in the denominations.

II

Meanwhile, referring to Schlesinger's thesis, the denominations' "system of thought" was also being challenged and shaken as never before in America, even during the heyday of "infidelity." For, concurrent with the social upheavals which attended the "economic revolution" and "industrial metamorphosis,"³⁹ came the full impact of Darwinian evolutionary thinking, which appeared to strike at the very root of Christianity and all religion. Because it was posited upon the induction that "all life developed from pre-existing life,"⁴⁰ evolutionism seemed to remove the creating Deity and his providence from the origin and direction of the world and to erase the created boundary between man and the other animals, placing all upon a continuum. This appeared to do away with the object of Christian devotion and to destroy the foundations of Christian ethics.⁴¹

It was this evolutionism which "germinated ideas wherever it penetrated, and it penetrated everywhere."⁴² The so-called "new history," which appeared, was based upon the application of evolutionary theories to the

³⁸ Francis G. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question* (New York: Macmillan Co., reprinting, 1930; copyright, 1900), pp. 5, 6.

³⁹ Bert James Loewenberg, "Darwinism Comes to America, 1859-1900," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXVIII (December, 1941), 342.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

⁴¹ See W. H. Roberts, "The Reaction of the American Protestant Churches to the Darwinian Philosophy, 1860-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, March, 1936). Stow Persons discusses the way in which the theory of natural selection tended to undermine belief in design in *Evolutionary Thought in America*, of which he was the editor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 425 ff.

⁴² Loewenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

understanding of the past, and the so-called "higher criticism" of the Bible was largely the application of the new history to the sacred volume.⁴³

Evolutionary thinking was certainly nothing new in Western civilization, and its sudden sway in America is not accounted for simply by the convincing empirical documentation of Darwin and the persuasive universality of Spencer's systematization. It was a period of great changes in the structures of the culture, but it is "the rate rather than the fact of change [which] endows the forty years after 1860 with epochal attributes."⁴⁴ It was evolutionary theories, sanctified by mingling with the traditional Christian doctrine of Providence, which spawned the general idea of "progress" and made the rapid change tolerable and even exhilarating. Hence its tremendous appeal and almost universal sway.

Evolutionary theories were an aspect of the world-view of modern science and at the time gave structure to its cosmology. Hence their tremendous appeal forced theology at last to try to come to terms intellectually with the world-view of modern science. Since the end of the eighteenth century the bulk of the Protestant denominations had cultivated scholastic orthodoxy, enlivened and more or less sentimentalized by pietistic revivalism and apart from the spirit and mind of modern civilization. The forcing of the issue by evolutionism was therefore, in effect, a forcing of the denominations to take up again the intellectual business laid on the table at the opening of the nineteenth century and largely ignored during the intervening busy years of institutional proliferation and growth. Now the issue between science and theology could no longer be ignored. And the pathetic nature of the denominations' position is revealed in the fact that when in 1926, in Dayton, Tennessee, "twelve unlettered hill-men were constituted a jury to decide the most momentous issue of modern thought," Tom Stewart, the public prosecutor, could ask in all seriousness — "Who says we can't bar science that deprives us of all hope of the future life to come?"⁴⁵ There indeed is the place for tears.

Struck by what appeared to be mutiny in the social and economic areas at the very time when ideological winds were sweeping them from their old theological anchorages, the denominations seemed in danger of floundering. Derisive gods might have found grounds for sardonic laughter in the situation. The social outlook of the denominations was hard pressed during this period because it was too "modern" — too immediately immersed in the contemporary outlook, while their theology was hit because it was too

⁴³ See, e.g., George H. Williams (ed.), *The Harvard Divinity School* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), pp. 169-72.

⁴⁴ Loewenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

⁴⁵ Gaius Glenn Atkins, *Religion in Our Times* (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1932), pp. 249-51.

"ancient," too out of touch with the modern currents of thought, too anachronistic.

The two challenges, to return to Schlesinger's terms, went hand in hand.⁴⁶ The burgeoning industrial system created the great cities, which became the centers for the development and easy dissemination of new knowledge and havens for the new religious, social, and economic heretics. Meanwhile, some of the denominationally supported educational institutions, including church-related seminaries, were reaping a harvest from the acquisitive, exploitive, middle-class social structure in the form of large gifts from Carnegie's peculiarly endowed individuals who, willy-nilly, accumulated wealth. Such gifts, by making these schools financially independent of their denominations, had the effect of freeing their administrations and professors from direct denominational control. This, of course, was not entirely unappreciated. Thus one suspects a bit of existential involvement in the statement of Andrew Preston Peabody, professor at Harvard, that his "intercourse with rich men has been such as to make me thank God for them, and deprecate with my whole soul the leveling doctrines" now abroad in the land, especially since on the next page he notes the number of schools and professorships such men had endowed.⁴⁷

Thus at just the time when so many young men from America were imbibing "advanced" theological ideas in the German universities and returning to teaching positions in the theological schools of America, these schools had opened before them the possibility of freeing their professors from church discipline. Hence in several instances, when denominations attempted to censure or discipline "heretical" professors, their schools, in effect, declared their independence from such churchly control.

This permitted the cultivation in America of "modern" or "liberal" approaches to the several disciplines in the theological schools which were not necessarily responsibly related to the churches at all and were always in danger of becoming preciously exotic and even contemptuous of the denominations' level of enlightenment. This helps to explain why the controversy between sciences and theology in America was not settled when and because a handful of such professors in the seminaries accepted evolutionism, any more than it was settled when and because several outstanding, but practically independent, ministers, such as Henry Ward Beecher and his worthy successor, Lyman Abbott, decided in sweet reasonableness that it was "God's way of doing things."

When they were forced at last to consider the complex theoretical and practical issues between science and theology, the religious leaders reacted

⁴⁶ Lowenberg in the article cited in n. 39 spells this out in some detail.

⁴⁷ Carnegie, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-28.

according to their individual lights, which in turn (to mix the metaphor) depended upon the theological stream or tradition in which they were immersed.

One can distinguish clearly enough for our purposes three outstanding strands in American Protestant thought during this period.⁴⁸ The first was traditional orthodoxy or biblical authoritarianism, which provided what Hopkins aptly calls the "frozen foundation of complacency" characteristic of "conventional, institutionalized, orthodox Protestantism."⁴⁹ It was frankly supernaturalistic in outlook, and it maintained a solid core of doctrine. But it had long been conditioned and modified by pietism and revivalism, and the doctrinal outlines might be fuzzy, except in such uncorruptedly staunch men as Charles Hodge, professor of theology at Princeton from 1822 to 1878, who possessed an uncanny ability to reduce the profound complexities of the Christian walk in the modern world to a kind of rough-hewn, orthodox simplicity.

In general, the men in this tradition met the challenge to their way of thinking with pietistic indifference, with strong dogmatic denials, or with open contempt, as when Hodge declared that "we can even afford to acknowledge our incompetence to meet them in argument, or to answer their objections; and yet our faith remains unshaken and rational."⁵⁰ They tended to meet the challenges to the churches' social program first with surprise and anger and then with increased efforts through charity. By and large, they were slow and reluctant to criticize the social system and inclined to be critical of those who did.

The second strand was that of romantic liberalism — or "progressive religion"⁵¹ — which was rooted in philosophic idealism and appealed in one way or another to intuition. The romantic movement in America during the early nineteenth century spawned transcendentalism among New England Unitarians, which, for this reason, was two steps removed from the main stream of American Protestantism. Hence the descendants of transcendentalism in America have, by and large, been outside the regular denominations. To be sure, Unitarianism later digested Emerson and even Parker — under pressures from the ill-fated Free Religious Association organized in 1867.⁵² But the real religious descendants of the transcendentalist movement

⁴⁸ Compare E. E. Aubrey, "Religious Bearings of the Modern Scientific Movement," in J. T. McNeill *et al.* (eds.), *Environmental Factors in Christian History* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1939), pp. 361–79.

⁴⁹ Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁵⁰ Charles Hodge, "Inspiration," *Princeton Review*, XXIX (1857), 662.

⁵¹ See, for example, John Wright Buckham, *Progressive Religious Thought in America: A Survey of the Enlarging Pilgrim Faith* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919).

⁵² See Stow Persons, *Free Religion: An American Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947).

in America would seem to be the host of "cults" bred of the "new-thought" movement, whose thought has only recently been slipping into the Protestant churches through the back door⁵³ and may result in revolutionary changes.

Meanwhile, the comet's tail of romanticism swept across Horace Bushnell in the fold of "orthodoxy" as defined in Connecticut-centered Congregational Calvinism, and, as Perry Miller has suggested, with Bushnell this "Calvinism itself was, as it were, transcendentalized."⁵⁴ Granted this, perhaps the most significant thing Bushnell did, so far as the immediate future of American Protestantism was concerned, was to maintain this position within "orthodox" Congregationalism, which gradually over the years managed to digest this form of romanticized orthodoxy. In the long view, Emerson and Bushnell represent aspects of the same religious movement in America, but, thanks to Bushnell, it took root in the denominations and flowered as "liberalism."

For Bushnell the central problem of his early life was that of the relationship between the dogmatic formulations of his inherited orthodoxy and the world of science. Thus torn, as he put it, between his head and his heart, he chose to follow his heart; and finally his solution "came to him at last, after all his thought and study, not as something reasoned out, but as an inspiration, — a revelation from the mind of God himself." He had experienced the direct, intuitive perception of "the Gospel" — of "God in Christ."⁵⁵ For him this was the Christian experience and, as such, was as real and unassailable as were all other direct perceptions.

This it was that provided succeeding generations of romantic liberals in American Protestantism a basis for Christian faith that could not be harmed by all the "acids of modernity." Men of this sentiment during the nineteenth century moved in one of two possible directions in meeting the challenge of science to theology: they might "abstract religion from the realm of scientific verification" — and hence of criticism — or they might "claim for the data of religious experience the same scientific status as the

⁵³ For a treatment of transcendentalism as a religious movement see Perry Miller's Introduction in his *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950). In my review of this work I stressed the relationship of transcendentalism to the present "cults" (*Journal of Religion*, XXXI [January, 1951], 52-54). For a sympathetic treatment of these "cults" see Charles S. Braden, *These Also Believe* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949). In my review of this book I pointed out how New Thought was beginning to invade the Protestant churches (*Journal of Religion*, XXX [April, 1950], 142-44).

⁵⁴ Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards to Emerson," *New England Quarterly*, XIII (December, 1940), 616.

⁵⁵ [Mary Bushnell Cheney], *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1880), pp. 56, 192. *God in Christ: Three Discourses Delivered at New Haven, Cambridge, and Andover* was published at Hartford (Brown & Parsons) in 1849. It contains the famous "Dissertation on Language."

data of the physical sciences and build thereon an empirical science of theology."⁵⁶ Hence the doctrine of immanence became central — God was seen as revealing himself through all of history, and religion as "the gradually developed experiences of men who had some perception of the infinite in nature and in human life."⁵⁷

Men in this tradition faced evolutionism with an equanimity of soul that bordered on the blasé, as witness Lyman Abbott's *Theology of an Evolutionist*, published in 1897. Beginning with a romantic teleology, they produced a facile harmonization of science with Christianity over which one's mind may glide unruffled by any angularities of meaning. But perhaps because their minds were unshackled from tradition (we are "to look for our experience of God in our own times and in our own souls," said Abbott)⁵⁸ and because they believed in developmental progress and because, rooted in Bushnell, they retained a sense of the importance of nurture in a community and hence were sensitive to the ill effects of adverse environments, when men in this tradition faced the challenge to the churches' social program they tended to become social critics and even prophets. Commonly it is these men, of whom Washington Gladden is an outstanding example, who come to mind when we think of the "social gospel."

The third strand to be noted is that of scientific modernism — the way of building "a religion out of the materials furnished by the several sciences."⁵⁹ Perhaps this position was most pithily put by Shailer Mathews in his *The Faith of Modernism*,⁶⁰ when he said that modernism "is the use of the methods of modern science to find, state and use the permanent and central values of inherited orthodoxy in meeting the needs of a modern world." Of course, at this time "science" included the burgeoning disciplines of "scientific" psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history.

While romantic liberalism seems to have been characteristic of ministers in the churches, scientific modernism was the forte of professors in the schools. Men in this stream adopted evolutionism as a scientific hypothesis, on the basis of which they became socio-historians, developed the psychology and sociology of religion, or expounded a "scientific" philosophy of religion that threatened sometimes to crowd Christian theology out of the

⁵⁶ Aubrey, *op. cit.*, p. 368. Compare Lyman Abbott, *Reminiscences* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915), p. 451, where he says he could disregard "the scientific arguments for Christian truth" and appeal "directly to human experience and . . . find evidence for Christianity in the hearts and consciousnesses of my hearers," for "the foundation of spiritual faith is neither in the church nor in the Bible, but in the spiritual consciousness of man."

⁵⁷ Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Aubrey, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

⁶⁰ Shailer Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1924), p. 23.

seminaries. When they faced the social crisis, they tended to maintain a proper "scientific" objectivity — became "social scientists" or sociologists, and, under the compelling impulsion of the "endeavor to reach beliefs and their application in the same way that chemists or historians reach and apply their conclusions,"⁶¹ they tended to abandon normative pretensions and become increasingly descriptive. One of their characteristic "social" products was the kind of settlement houses which were founded as middle-class outposts in the urban slums, where students might become acquainted at first hand with the life of the lower classes and study conditions among the denizens of these modern jungles,⁶² perhaps even salvaging some wrecked lives.

Each of these strands had origins far back in the history of America and, indeed, of Christendom, and, of course, on the generally amorphous topography of the American religious mind they did not run as discrete streams. They crossed and recrossed in complex ways in different individuals and groups. Elements of each were mingled in ever changing kaleidoscopic patterns by the host of highly individualistic thinkers. Nevertheless, the strands are definable — these traditions existed in the American Protestant churches, and no doubt parties would have grown up around them in the denominations in any case. But the impact of evolutionism accentuated their differences by giving them a common center of interest — or of opposition — and led to controversies that, in general, augmented the prevailing ideological turmoil. However that may be, it is clear that when the denominations' way of thinking and social program were challenged, there was a great deal of confusion in Protestant theology in America, and Schlesinger's "organized religion" was by no means a massive unity either organizationally or ideologically.

In 1881 Daniel Dorchester, noting the several signs of "religious progress," enthused that "theology is less scholastic and repulsive, has less of pagan adulteration, has been lubricated and broadened, and is better for its siftings."⁶³ But from the standpoint of the mid-twentieth century the lubrication appears less salutary, and we are more inclined to agree with H. S. Commager that "during the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, [organized] religion prospered while theology went slowly bankrupt."⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Compare B. J. Loewenberg, in *B. L. & B.*, p. 425; "The settlement houses were remedial agencies devoted to the salvage of wrecked lives, but they gave scarcely any attention to the economic whirlpools that produced social catastrophe." However, "conceived as laboratories for social workers . . . they came to be infinitely more."

⁶³ Dorchester, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁶⁴ H. S. Commager, *The American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 165. The "bankruptcy" of theology among the Congregationalists is made explicit, for example, by Washington Gladden in his *Recollections*, published in 1909. "My theology," he noted (p. 163), "had to be hammered out on the anvil for daily use in the pulpit. The pragmatic test was the only one that could be applied to it: 'Will it

III

If we look into this extremely complex situation for one central thread upon which to string our interpretation, I think we find it in the change of attitude toward laissez faire individualism rooted in the doctrine of automatic harmony,⁶⁵ which was then taking place. In the September 8, 1892, issue, the *Congregationalist*, in quoting Professor H. C. Adams, of the University of Michigan, with tacit approval, struck the keynote of the changing time: "Modern economy has . . . made the mistake of assuming that free competition would guarantee just exchanges and hence realize industrial justice." But "the trust in free competition has failed to realize the Christian idea of fair exchange."⁶⁶ Even more pointed was the statement of Charles Worcester Clark in the article quoted earlier: "In the early part of this century . . . the conditions essential for the justification of the *laissez faire* theory of political economy were present: freedom to move from place to place, and from industry to industry, wherever the best chance offered." But "that fair field for individual merit to prove itself and win its due reward has been our pride so long that it is hard to believe it gone. But it is gone."⁶⁷ And some clergymen, at least, were canny enough to take the attitude expressed by Washington Gladden: "If the old order changeth giving place to new, we may as well have our eyes open to what is going on and make our peace with the new order on the best possible terms."⁶⁸

If it be asked what was the "cause" of the extremely rapid change that was taking place, the reply must be that the important thing was modern science — science as an outlook or way of thinking — and the consequent

work?" He recalled with relish that Dr. John Todd, moderator of the council which installed him in the church in North Adams, in 1866 "skillfully conducted the examination over ground on which there was no chance of discussion, and after about twenty minutes, brought it to an abrupt conclusion. It was a palpable evasion, but I was not responsible for it. 'I thought,' said Dr. Todd to me after the examination, 'that you were a great heretic.' Perhaps I am," I answered, 'but you didn't bore in the right place' " (p. 168).

Finally, he notes with obvious approval that, in the "creed" drawn up by the "committee of twenty-five" in 1883, "all the distinctively Calvinistic dogmas . . . were eliminated; there was no formal doctrine of the Trinity . . . election, in the Calvinistic sense, was not in it, nor was original sin, nor Biblical infallibility; and the sufferings of Christ on the cross were described as his 'sacrifice of himself' " (p. 288).

⁶⁵ See Paul Tillich, "The World Situation," in H. P. Van Dusen (ed.), *The Christian Answer* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945). This change of attitude is exemplified in Washington Gladden, *Recollections* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), pp. 295-97.

⁶⁶ *Congregationalist*, p. 289, col. 5.

⁶⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁶⁸ Washington Gladden, "A Question That Ought To Be Settled," *Congregationalist*, LXXVII, (July 28, 1892), 237, col. 3.

technological developments.⁶⁹ It was science in these senses that transformed the outward face of human living more in about two generations than had been the case in all the previous centuries. It was this that Woodrow Wilson had in mind when he told the members of the G.A.R. in 1915 that "the nation in which you now live is not the nation for whose union you fought." And Henry Adams had already muttered, "My country in 1900 is something totally different from my own country in 1860."

On the technological side, the symbol of the science which created this new world came to be the "machine," which may stand broadly for the instruments created by man for the control and use of physical nature. In this, man was tremendously successful — so successful, indeed, that modern man's fears are not primarily his fears of "nature," of epidemic disease, earthquake, wind, flood, and fire. Rather, modern man's fears are those of the "machine" he somehow created, which seemed to take on a life of its own, becoming the monster of Frankenstein. Henry Adams pictured the predicament of modern man as that of the creator of the "Dynamo" who has inadvertently grasped the two poles and can thereafter neither let go nor control his own actions.⁷⁰ Now the flower and hence the symbol of the "machine" was the modern city, the product of technological industrialism. And the problems created by the machine were accentuated and seen in relief in the urban centers.

Hence during this period of increasing recognition of the Frankenstein possibilities of the "machine" — of the sense that increasing control of physical nature was paralleled by decreasing control of the "machine" — probably the most common way of stating the basic problem of the age was to say that it was the problem of control. Looking back from the vantage point of 1909, Washington Gladden recalled how, as early as 1860, "the amount of titanic energy which was even then finding vent in the life of . . . greater New York" impressed upon him "a vivid sense of the impersonality and brutality of the whole movement, of the lack of coordinating intelligence," and placed one in a position where one

could not help wondering whether in liberating the force which gathers men into cities, and equipping it with steam and electricity, a power had not been created which was stronger than the intelligence which seeks to control it; whether such aggregations of humanity, with

⁶⁹ Compare William Adams Brown, *The Church in America* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), p. 141: "There are two ways in which modern science has affected the task of the church. It has affected it as pure science by its challenge to the assumptions on which the older theology is based. It has affected it even more profoundly as applied science by the changes which it has brought about in the external environment in which the church must work."

⁷⁰ Compare Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, Vol. IV: *The American Spirit* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 18.

will no better socialized than those of the average nineteenth-century American, are not by their own action self-destructive.⁷¹

In September, 1892, the editors of the *Congregationalist* approved Professor H. C. Adams' statement of the question: "The monopoly problem of today is really this — shall organized industry, with its positive benefits and great possibilities, be directed for personal or for public ends?" And "shall this tremendous industrial power be in the arbitrary control of individuals, or be exercised under conditions of responsibility?"⁷²

This way of looking at things became widespread during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and, broadly speaking, gave shape and meaning to "the social question" and defined for many the nature of the crisis. An English writer, surveying in 1901 "a century's progress in religious life," summed it up very well: "The first half of the [19th] century was individualistic; the second half has tended to become collectivistic. Freedom was the earlier ideal, brotherhood is the latter." For "the policy of *laissez-faire* is thought to have broken down, and the State is repeatedly called upon to take over and control the interests of the Community."⁷³

IV

Now then, the so-called "social-gospel" movement must be seen within the broad context of this widespread sentiment that the social problem was that of instrumenting planned social and economic controls in the interests of justice and that this would involve a revolution in thinking and attitudes as well as in practice. There would have to be such a change in thinking and attitudes because the mind that had so successfully created the "machine" and which was still predominant was individualistic and *laissez faire* and hence constitutionally opposed to planning and control in the social and economic spheres. Further, these attitudes had accumulated powerful pragmatic and religious sanctions.

Recognition that there was a "social question" was almost universal. A. I. Abell makes the point that so large did it loom over the denominations' life

⁷¹ Gladden, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91. It is interesting to note that Gladden, who frankly advocated overhead control of the social and economic realms (see p. 314), as frankly indorsed the regnant anarchistic Congregational individualism in theological and ecclesiastical affairs. "It had come to be recognized as Congregational doctrine," he said with reference to the "creed" of 1883, "that no ecclesiastical body existed, or could be created, with power to frame such a creed and impose it upon the churches — each church, by the primary Congregational principle, having the right to make its own creed" (p. 287).

⁷² "The Monopoly Problem," *Congregationalist*, LXXVII (September 8, 1892), 289, col. 5.

⁷³ Walter F. Adeney, *A Century's Progress in Religious Life and Thought* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1901), p. 183.

that, for the time at least, doctrinal, creedal, and polity questions both within and between denominations tended to be subordinated. Even the Episcopalians, he notes, toned down or dropped their differences to make the keynote of their General Convention in 1880 “‘not the restatement of dogma, but the urgency of Christian work.’”⁷⁴ All, of course, did not accept the view of the nature of the “social question” noted above. *The social-gospel movement was the response in the denominations on the part of those who did.* This seems to be the one common characteristic useful in defining what “movement” there was.

This is to suggest that the social-gospel movement cannot be defined theologically or institutionally. It was never incorporated in any independent new organizations; it did not result in any new denominations. The theologies associated with the movement were many and as diverse as the diverse and individualistic religious pattern in America could provide. Indeed, down at least to the 1930's, theology in relation to the movement was in a real sense fortuitous and instrumental. It was, in reality, a movement in the denominations looking for theological roots.

Walter Rauschenbusch recognized this clearly enough in opening his *Theology for the Social Gospel* published in 1917, with the statement that “we have a social gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it.” Therefore, as he says, he devoted the first three chapters to the attempt “to show that a readjustment and expansion of theology so that it will furnish an adequate intellectual basis for the social gospel, is necessary, feasible, desirable and legitimate.”

To be sure, the general situation we have described tended to give the movement a kind of theological complexion. The leaders found that the prevailing individualistic outlook of pietistic revivalism and the “gospel of wealth” rooted in traditional orthodoxy was not a congenial atmosphere for their views, and hence they were almost forced into the paths of the burgeoning reconstructive movement in theology. The “social gospel” became the church party platform of all “progressives,” “liberals,” or “modernists” — of all those movements that represented attempts to come to terms with the ideas and spirit of modern civilization while maintaining continuity with the Christian tradition. There was never the one-to-one relationship suggested by G. G. Atkins however: “The ‘social gospel’ and liberal theology were as interlocking as were the ‘old gospel,’ economic conservatism and a general despair of the future of the world.”⁷⁵ This situation tended to place leadership of the movement in the hands of informed people, the educated, those in the churches who were most in touch with current intellectual life,

⁷⁴ Abell, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17.

⁷⁵ Atkins, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

and hence to give the movement itself an "eggheadish" aspect which was to prove a fertile seed bed for opposition in the denominations.

Once the concern for social reconstruction in the interests of equity and justice became widespread among individuals, two factors in the religious situation in America became very important in shaping the emerging movement. The first was the nature of the denominations as voluntary associations. This meant that any man who could gain a pulpit and the backing of a local congregation, a denominational post, or even a professorship had a secure platform from which to speak and propagandize. Hence all views were bound to be aired.

Further, every such concern or idea, in order to live and have power in a denomination, had to be incarnated in a movement, and eventually the drive of the movement had to be to capture the denominational machinery itself. Finally, since the evangelistic or missionary enterprise was central in each denomination, it was recognized that those who could define its nature would control the denomination's life. Hence the movement generated the drive to shift the conception of the evangelistic work of the churches from individualistic revivalism to social reconstruction — and its success in this respect should not be underestimated. "It is true the work of the Church has been markedly individualistic," a speaker patiently explained to Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York, in 1897, but now changed conditions have served "to make it alive to its social obligations and duties." This, he thought, was "the difference between *remedial* Christianity and *preventive* Christianity." "That is to say, the social work of the Church in the past . . . has been to remedy the effects of evils which have been left to work themselves out and multiply themselves in fresh evil effects." However, "to-day the Church has aroused itself to this: it is our business to strike deeper, to get at the roots of these evils and remove them, — and then we shall be under no necessity to remedy their effects."⁷⁶

The second important factor was the theological confusion and turmoil that prevailed — or, perhaps better, "the absence of theology in the supreme sense of that word," as George A. Gordon suggested in 1897,⁷⁷ at the time when the "acids of modernity" were eating away the possibility of religious belief in the traditional sense. However, people thus set afloat, mentally and spiritually, could still cling to belief in "Christian" work which was relevant to immediate situations. For those religiously adrift, there was assurance and comfort to be found in the thought that perhaps the Christian could not go too far astray when feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting

⁷⁶ Charles A. Berry, "Retrospect and Outlook," in Rossiter W. Raymond (ed.), *The New Puritanism* (New York, 1898), pp. 245-46.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

the sick and imprisoned, giving the cup of cold water for Christ's sake. Perhaps it was never formulated in just this fashion, but one profound appeal of the social-gospel movement was that it made possible for many idealistic Americans continued belief in Christianity "for the work's sake." No doubt what many nominally Christian people really came to believe in was the work of social betterment and renovation.

In order to understand the sweep and scope of the movement in the denominations, it is helpful to see it through the eyes of one of its most active leaders in the years just before the first World War. Writing the Foreword for his book *Christianizing the Social Order* in October, 1912, Walter Rauschenbusch gave as one reason for such a work that "outsiders misjudge the part which the churches are taking in the impending social transformation because they are ignorant of the quiet revolution that is going on in the spirit and aims of the American churches." Indeed, "few, probably, even of those who are taking an active part in their social awakening, realize fully the far-reaching importance of this great historic movement." There was taking place, he thought, "a great change" in "the life of this nation," which he compared to an individual's experience of conversion and interpreted as "the stirring of God in the souls of men." Among "the people in the churches, who have long been consciously religious, the new thing is the social application of their religious life." For "the old current of their religion is pouring into a broader channel of social purpose, and running with swift flow toward the achievement of public justice and love." Indeed, this is increasingly felt to be "the great business of religion."

Rauschenbusch was elated at the change that had taken place. He could, as he said, look back to the time before 1900, which "pioneers of Christian social thought in America" recalled "as a time of lonesomeness [when] we were few and we shouted in a wilderness." But since 1900, he thought, "the able ministers who were not already physically or mentally old by 1900, and who were not rendered impervious by doctrinal rubbercasting of some kind, have been permeated by the social interest almost in a body," until, today, perhaps the most convincing proof of the spread of the social interest in the ministry is the fact that the old men and the timid men are falling in line."

But what pleased him most of all perhaps was that "the social interest in the Church has now run beyond the stage of the solitary pioneer. It has been admitted within the organizations of the Church." Indeed, as C. Howard Hopkins puts it, social Christianity had become "official."⁷⁸ For between 1901, when the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the National Council of Congregational Churches "took preliminary action leading toward official social-service programs," and in 1912,

⁷⁸ Hopkins, *op. cit.*, chap. xvii, pp. 280-301.

when Rauschenbusch was writing, all the great denominations took official action through the creation of boards, committees, councils, and so on — of social action.⁷⁹ Outstanding was the Methodist Federation for Social Service, organized in Washington, D.C., in December, 1907, as “an effort to apply the sane and fervid spirit of Methodism to the social needs of our time.”⁸⁰

The “climax of the official recognition of social Christianity was attained in the organization of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in 1908.” In 1912 it adopted its famous “social creed,” patterned after the Methodist “creed” of 1908.⁸¹ Hopkins concludes that perhaps social Christianity reached its popular peak with the Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911–12 — the very time when Rauschenbusch was writing. This movement Hopkins describes as “the most comprehensive evangelistic effort ever undertaken in the United States,” and, he adds, it was “virtually converted . . . into a social gospel campaign.”⁸² Rauschenbusch had concluded in 1912 that “the movement has probably done more than any other single agency to lodge the social gospel in the common mind of the church.”⁸³

It is indicated that the social-gospel movement was one of great proportions in the denominations on the eve of the first World War. A revolution in outlook was taking place in the churches, which is epitomized in the comment of an English writer: “A hundred years ago the dominant idea in religion was the salvation of the individual soul; to-day it is the redemption of society.” “Formerly,” he added, “it was said that attendance at the weekly prayer meeting was the test of the vitality of a church; now we look for the gauge in its social activities.” However, “there is no need for these to supersede the prayer meeting,” although “it is now the case that the Church best reveals the energy of its spiritual life by the self-sacrificing devotion of its social work.”⁸⁴

Keeping in mind that an important aspect of the background of this social-gospel movement in the denominations was a reaction against the individualism of pietistic revivalism and the amalgamation of Protestant Christianity with the social outlook of industrial capitalism helps us to understand how and why the movement tended to swing to the opposite extremes of substituting social concern for individual Christian experience

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 302, 316–17.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁸³ Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1914), p. 20.

⁸⁴ Adeney, *op. cit.*, pp. 171, 186.

and commitment; of identifying the Christian gospel with current schemes for reconstructing society; of judging the work of the Christian church on the basis of its effectiveness in furthering social work and social renovation; of substituting sociology for theology. How far this tendency ran it would be very difficult to ascertain. That it existed is beyond question, and it suggests the emergence of a new syncretistic outlook in reaction against that of the "gospel of wealth" era. By around 1932 the "informed" and "liberal" Protestant clergyman in America was about as blindly a Democrat or Socialist as his predecessor around 1885 had been a Republican.

v

It is against this background that we are to understand the emergence and development of the so-called "fundamentalist movement" in the denominations. Most simply, it is to be seen as the movement generated in opposition to the tendencies of the social-gospel movement noted earlier; and, by the same token, it was as broad, complex, and amorphous as its opponent.

The rise of self-conscious "liberal" or "modernist" movements — meaning thereby all the various attempts to reconcile Christian thinking and practice with the spirit and mind of the modern world — indicates that many people were being torn loose from traditional formulations of belief. And there was generated in some of them, as they sensed that they were being set adrift or uncharted waters, a strong tendency to cling to what appeared to be steadfast and sure.

On the one hand, then, fundamentalism was a genuinely "conservative" movement in the denominations — that is, a movement whose intention was to conserve the truly valuable elements of Christian tradition — to conserve continuity with historic Christianity in a way that common folk in the churches could understand. The sound, positive sentiment of fundamentalism was that the basis for the Christian church ought to be recognizable Christian experience and belief, explained and defended systematically in a theology having direct continuity with the Christian past. But, on the other hand, the movement was, as the self-styled "liberals" liked to see it, a movement of recalcitrant resistance to the ideas and spirit of the modern world — a truly reactionary movement spearheaded by what Shailer Mathews is reputed to have called his "contemporary theological ancestors." The fundamentalist was one who, being swept willy-nilly into the currents of modern life, grasped desperately and usually uncritically at whatever seemed able to stand immovable in the general flood.

In a sense the fundamentalist was more theologically minded than his liberal opponent. But so desperate was he to defend and preserve his parochial

view of Christian belief that he tended to suspect and to by-pass thinking completely and to assert on the basis of supported traditional authority what was conceived to be essential to the being of a Christian and a church. The so-called "fundamentals"⁸⁵ that were asserted were not theological at all, but pretheological assumptions — and, by the same token, they were to be posttheological. The "fundamentals" were the firmly planted posts that defined the limits of the corral in which Christianity was to be fenced, and whatever thinking was to be permitted was limited to placing the bars between these posts.

This attitude was, of course, contrary to the whole spirit and mind of the modern world. Therefore, it was natural for evolution to become the theological shibboleth (or perhaps I ought to say "sibboleth" — see Judges, chap. 12) of the movement. For evolutionism was the symbol of the modern mind. Hence, as E. E. Aubrey put it, the fundamentalist attacks on the Darwinian theory of evolution are not merely superstitious recalcitrance. "They are based on sound suspicions that to yield an inch is to expose the citadel of their system to destruction." For "it is not merely the origin of man which is involved but the scientific approach as such; and the evolutionary point of view spells destruction to dogmatic finality."⁸⁶

It is suggested, then, that the fundamentalist movement is to be seen as the movement generated in opposition to real and/or supposed tendencies in the social-gospel movement which was sweeping through the denominations on the eve of World War I. It was, on the one hand, soundly based — its essential sentiment was right. But, rooted in that side of American Protestantism that had never come to terms with the currents of the modern world, its theology and modes of thinking were so obsolete and anachronistic that it soon lost (if it had ever had) the appearance of intellectual leadership and constituency. The tragedy is that, in intelligence and imagination, real religious conservatism was about as bankrupt at the time as political conservatism appears to be today. All its checks drawn on pietistic revivalism and literalistic orthodoxy bounced. For this reason the fundamentalist movement became (as all conservative movements lacking imagination and intelligent leadership become) merely a political power-group movement in the denominations. One prototype of all American fundamentalists is the Congregational minister in Connecticut, who more than

⁸⁵ Although the statement of "fundamentals" varied somewhat, the following six would usually be included: the inerrancy of Scripture in every detail; the deity of Jesus; the virgin birth; the substitutionary theory of the atonement; the physical resurrection; the imminent, bodily return of Jesus to earth (see Steward G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* [New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931], and Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954]).

⁸⁶ Aubrey, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

a hundred years ago told Lyman Beecher and Nathaniel W. Taylor — the current “liberals” — “I may not be able to think and argue as well as you can, but I know what the people in the churches — the constituency — will stand.” And he did. And he created a great deal of trouble.

Fundamentalism is, I suppose, as old as Christianity. But the historians of what we call the fundamentalist movement in America commonly trace its origins to Bible, prophecy, and premillennialism conferences in the 1870's. But the crystallization of such a definable power movement in the denominations, as we have noted, may conveniently be dated with the publication of the twelve small volumes of *The Fundamentals* between 1909 and 1912. It is significant that this is precisely the period of the height of the social-gospel movement. Publication of these volumes was financed by two laymen, and by the time that the twelfth volume had appeared it was claimed that some three million copies had been distributed to religious leaders all over the world — about one million outside the United States.

In 1919 the World Christian Fundamentals Association was formed, because “it was no longer deemed sufficient to carry on a general propaganda through conservative interdenominational agencies, but the denominational machinery must now be captured for the same end.”⁸⁷

It is unnecessary to rehearse the movement in each of the denominations. Essentially, the aims of the movement were the same in each; the strategies and techniques varied largely according to the general cultural level of the group and the form of church polity. In each denomination the fundamentalists attempted to gain control of theological education, the missionary enterprises of the group, and the denominational machinery and to affirm and impose doctrinal standards that would successfully exclude those who did not accept the “fundamentals.”

Fundamentalism did not actually win in any major denomination. But it was defeated primarily not by direct discussion and debate of controverted theological issues but by the clever maneuvering of astute denominational politicians, who, like the poor, are always with us. These, to be sure, were riding the crest of the wave that finally broke beneath them in the decade 1929–39. Some of them, of course, do not know it yet.

It was these ten years that shook the world of the social-gospel “liberals” and “modernists” and broke their confident march along the path toward the “brave new world” to be achieved by social reconstruction, in which they had tended to make God the omnipotent ally who guaranteed a successful culmination. For, as Shailer Mathews told the Stockholm conference in 1925, “to recognize the divine presence as furthering and assuring

⁸⁷ Winfred E. Garrison, *The March of Faith: The Story of Religion in America since 1865* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1933), p. 277.

the permanent success of a sacrificial social-mindedness is the modern equivalent of the apostolic preaching of the Kingdom of God."⁸⁸

Since around 1930, capable intellectual leaders in the denominations have, in effect, been in a mood to appreciate what the best side of the fundamentalist movement really stood for as a genuinely "conservative" Christian movement. Beginning early in the 1930's and continuing into the present, there has been a general stirring in the denominations, characterized by attempts critically to evaluate the life and work, faith and order, of the free churches in America on the basis of a re-evaluation of their historical traditions and in the context of a theological renaissance.

Although appearing in different garbs in different denominations and groups, so that one cannot speak of a precisely definable general movement, the stirrings seem to share a common spirit, characterized by a heightened theological consciousness, a willingness to re-examine traditional formulations of the Christian faith of Protestants in the traditional terms, a critical attitude toward the "liberalism" and "modernism" of the immediate past, and attempts to revitalize the life of the denominations on the basis of theological formulations of the nature of the church and its relationship to the general culture. It is within this context and in this spirit that the historical examination of the free churches in America is now proceeding.

Finally, in keeping with a current mode, I should like to close with a paradox: the crisis is as yet not past, but the patient is not resting easily, and this, in a church, is a basis for hope.

⁸⁸ G. K. A. Bell (ed.), *The Stockholm Conference, 1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 140.

ON THE "MORAL" INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

"It is still the fundamental belief of Americans," declared a leading churchman in 1893, "that the majority has no right to do what it pleases except when it pleases to do what is right. We believe in a moral law that underlies and should override all statute laws. . . . And the foundation for this national belief is laid in the Christian faith of the majority of the American people." A few years earlier the United States Supreme Court had already begun to incorporate that sentiment into the law of the land. The "due process" clause of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments provided the opening. With the confidence that went with conviction in those days, the judges (or in any case a small majority of them) bypassed a long legal tradition that interpreted "due process" as proper legal *procedure*, and thereby set themselves free to challenge the *fairness*, *rightness*, and *morality* of any statute. Their work in striking down major social legislation for more than three decades illustrates the "amalgamation" of religious ideology with the dominant business rationale, which Sidney Mead has described (pp. 95ff., above).

In the following article, John P. Roche (Professor of Political Science, Brandeis University) does well what many have done: he exposes the tortured logic and raw inconsistencies by which the justices achieved their predetermined conclusions. [See also R. G. McCloskey, *The American Supreme Court* (1960), chapters 5, 6; W. H. Hamilton, "The Path of Due Process of Law," *Ethics*, XLVIII (April 1938).] The article is especially noteworthy for two additional points: (1) The Court implicitly made a crucial choice among social and economic values when it exalted "the well-being of the investor and the liberty of the entrepreneur" over both economic rationality and the police power of the state; (2) Whatever the Court may have thought it was doing, it did not choose "laissez faire" over "paternalism" but merely preserved a condition whereby the dominant business classes remained the protected "wards of the state."

Mr. Roche's spirited presentation sometimes reflects his impatience with the justices' self-righteous wrongheadedness. For the judges seemed completely unaware of their economic predilections, and were incapable of understanding the nature of the choice they had made, much less that they were giving positive aid to particular interests in the name of neutrality. A whole school of entrepreneurial history to-

day supports the argument that if American entrepreneurs had not enjoyed the liberties granted them, American economic development could never have proceeded so well. [See, e.g., J. E. Sawyer, "The Entrepreneur and the Social Order," in *Men in Business*, W. Miller, ed. (1952); T. C. Cochran, "The Legend of the Robber Barons," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXIV (1950); and especially A. Nevins, "New Lamps for Old in History," *American Archivist* (Jan. 1954). Compare G. Kolko, "The Premises of Business Revisionism," *Business History Review*, XXXIII (Autumn 1959); D. Chalmers, "From Robber Barons to Industrial Statesmen: Standard Oil and the Business Historian," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, XX (Oct. 1960); and J. Tipple, "The Robber Baron in the Gilded Age: Entrepreneur or Iconoclast?" in *The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal*, H. W. Morgan, ed. (1963).] But one cannot endow the justices with such a defense. The choice they made for entrepreneurial liberty derived fortuitously from social prejudices rather than from grander theoretical considerations. As Arnold Paul observes ["Legal Progressivism, The Courts, and the Crisis of the 1890's," *Business History Review*, XXXIII (Winter 1959)], it was not until the popular unrest threatened the ascendancy of the dominant economic classes that the Court went "all the way" in transforming the meaning of due process, and thereby projected itself into the center of the political process.

It is still possible to regard the justices' blindness to their prejudices as a consequence of the perfect conformity of their views with the ideology of the day — the *Zeitgeist*, as Mr. Roche calls it. The "laissez-faire" policy that substantive due process protected, Walton Hamilton has written [source cited above], "was fashioned from the most respectable ideological stuff of the later nineteenth century. The ideas out of which it was shaped were in full accord with the dominant thought of the age. They were an aspect of common sense . . . a test of straight thinking and sound opinion." If the justices had not revolutionized the legal concept of due process, Hamilton argues, some other way would have been found to produce a maximum of entrepreneurial liberty over all other values.

Yet even Hamilton notes that the great triumph of entrepreneurial liberty "did not come until half a decade after the turn of the century, when it had ceased to be common sense, when legislators were forsaking its precepts, and when in philosophy, economics, and government it was on the way out." Indeed, the very legislation the Court struck down after 1890 testifies to the existence of powerful challenges to the justices' assumptions. In other words, it was not that the justices were unaware of their assumptions because they were too widely accepted to be called to their attention; it was rather that the challenges emanated from economic and social circles they would not respect.

In presenting his case against the judiciary's use of due process, Mr. Roche sometimes reveals his own commitments. For example, by exploring the apparent inconsistency of Holmes' position on due proc-

ess. Mr. Roche evidently rejects the substantive interpretation without qualification. Holmes, on the other hand, never abnegated all responsibility to pass substantive judgment upon legislation. But in the *Lochner* dissent, he did attempt, with his reference to "a fair and rational man" and to "fundamental principles as they have been understood by the traditions of our people and our law," to establish some norm that would serve to minimize restraint — much as he attempted to establish "clear and present danger" as a criterion for judicial restraint in civil liberties cases. Holmes was aware, as surely most liberals are, that in pursuit of certain *immediate* objectives legislatures sometimes unwittingly set precedents that jeopardize more important social values. In effect, Holmes argued that when certain matters seemed to be in fundamental dispute, the dispute became a political matter which lay beyond the Court's rightful consideration; but when some apparently precipitous legislative action trampled upon relatively undisputed principles, then the Court might intervene. Holmes had the virtue of understanding that the values a society holds change as time passes and circumstances change. In this respect the most important sentence in his *Lochner* dissent is not the oft-quoted thought about enacting Herbert Spencer's Social Statics, but the statement (at the very beginning) that "This case is decided upon an economic theory which a large part of the country does not entertain." (Emphasis added.)

But there is a more revealing example of Mr. Roche's commitment. On page 144 he says that by means of the Court's interpretation of due process, "the natural right to conduct business on one's own terms was incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment"; and in his conclusion he again alludes to businessmen ("private governments") as a distinct group set in opposition to "trade unions, regulatory commissions, or reform legislatures." Mr. Roche here writes in a tradition of liberal historiography that regards "the business community" as the principal villain in the history of American reform and assumes that "liberalism in America has been ordinarily the movement on the part of the other sections of society to restrain the power of the business community." [The quotation is from A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (1946) p. 505; see also introduction to Link, p. 345 below.] Yet surely Mr. Roche would agree that the Court's interpretations did not "incorporate into the 14th Amendment" the right of merchants (for example) to conduct business on *their* own terms; in many regions the railroads, freed from legislative restraint, usually dictated those terms. The point is that historians have long made it clear that *businessmen* — different ones in each case — were behind the major efforts to obtain railroad regulation, as they were indeed behind practically every regulatory measure ever proposed or passed. [See, e.g., G. H. Miller, "The Origins of the Iowa Granger Law," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XL (March 1954); Lee Benson, *Merchants, Farmers, and Railroads* (1955); R. H. Wiebe, *Businessmen and Reform* (1962).] In the New York cigarmakers case, for example, another

historian might have emphasized, not that cigar-smoking politicians were nauseated by the unsanitary manufacture of cigars, but that the tenement law derived in large measure from the efforts of cigar *factory owners* who resented the competition of tenement landlords!

Entrepreneurial Liberty and the Fourteenth Amendment

JOHN P. ROCHE

In the last quarter of the Nineteenth century and well on into the Twentieth, so the legend runs, the United States was dominated by a "conservative," "individualist," *laissez-faire* elite which succeeded in rewriting the Constitution and notably the Fourteenth Amendment to impose its ideology upon the nation. This notion has a certain superficial persuasiveness, but regrettably it is hardly sustained by a close analysis of the history of the period. There was clearly an elite of businessmen, but it was neither ruggedly individualistic, in terms of classic liberal economic thought, nor "conservative," in any acceptable definition of that much-abused term. On the contrary, this elite lived at the public trough, was nourished by state protection, and devoted most of its time and energies to evading Adam Smith's individualistic injunctions. In ideological terms, it was totally opportunistic: It demanded and applauded vigorous state action in behalf of its key values, and denounced state intervention in behalf of its enemies. The Constitution was not, in short, adapted to the needs of *laissez-faire* "conservatism" — which is a respectable, internally consistent system of political economy — but to the exigent needs of the great private governments. The "Robber Barons" had no ideology, they had interests. They had no theory of the state, but they knew what they wanted from it. Their key value, entrepreneurial liberty, might require a strong state one day (to combat trade unions) and a weak state the next (which would not pass wage and hour legislation), and this inconsistency troubled them not. If some scribe wanted to make them into "industrial statesmen," or "pillars of conservatism," that was merely one of the eccentricities of the division of labor.

Nowhere does this opportunism, this absence of theoretical consistency or of any concern for consistency appear more clearly than in the adaptation of the Fourteenth Amendment, especially the due process clause, to the

needs of private government. Central to the power of private governments in the American "Age of Enterprise" was the doctrine that private agreements between parties attained a sacred status, that such contracts were on a higher level of legitimacy than the police power of the state. To put it another way, the sanctity of contract put inter-"personal" (corporations, it should be noted, qualified as "persons") relationships largely beyond the authority of the political sovereign. From a different perspective the question was, to what extent is the authority of the community limited by private arrangements among its citizens; that is, by "liberty of contracts"?

The argument began early in the history of the Republic. The framers of the Constitution included, without discussion, a proviso that no state could "impair the obligation of a contract." It is impossible to know what they had in mind, but in all probability the stipulation was aimed at state legal tender laws, such as that in Rhode Island, which had required creditors to accept depreciated paper currency in payment of debts incurred in specie. While on its face the limitation was absolute, it is inconceivable that the authors of the Constitution intended to put private agreements wholly beyond the reach of the state's police power. Like many other provisions of the Constitution, it was agreed to in haste to be interpreted by later generations in leisure.¹

In the early Supreme Court cases, the Justices established the basic positions which, in differing contexts, have survived to our own time. John Marshall on one side asserted the vested rights view that contracts are made in heaven, that is, they have their roots in the natural law and are superior to the civil law. Marshall was far too shrewd to claim that all interpersonal agreements were inviolable contracts; by employing his favorite device — circular logic — he explained that a law forbidding usury did not impair contractual obligations because an arrangement to pay excessive interest was not, in the first place properly speaking, a "contract." Q.E.D. The opposing view, that contracts are conceived in the womb of the civil law rather than in a natural law Never-Never Land, was vigorously asserted by Justice William Johnson. Contracts, he argued, were always formulated and executed within the jurisdiction of the state police power. True the legislature did not have unlimited authority to modify or abrogate agreements, but it could establish rules and standards binding on private parties. These rules and regulations could even be applied retrospectively — to contracts made before they were enounced — if it could be shown that the contracting parties *should have known* that the legislature had reserved power in this area.

¹ See John P. Roche, "The Founding Fathers," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55 (1961), pp. 814 ff.

This is an extremely complex, even metaphysical doctrine. If, for example, X, a brewer, signed a twenty-year contract to supply Y, an innkeeper, with beer and after five years the state instituted prohibition, was the contract voided? From the natural-law viewpoint, the contract cannot be impaired by such a statute, and as the prohibition movement swept across the United States in the mid-Nineteenth century many liquor manufacturers hopefully fortified themselves with long-term contracts with a view to putting their business beyond the reach of the police power. But from the civil-law position, no private arrangements can bind the sovereign; therefore when X and Y made their contract, they did so with the knowledge that it was subject to later legislative modification. To put it another way, all contracts are enacted in a contingent universe, and this contingency is an implicit premise in the private agreement. Once the Taney Court added to this proposition the corollary that all doubts are resolved in favor of the public, the Contract Clause of the Constitution (Art. I, Sec. 10) went into hibernation as a significant limit on public policy.²

With this hasty summary in mind, let us direct our attention to the revival of the concept of contract which in the last years of the Nineteenth and first quarter of the Twentieth centuries became the fundamental buttress of private government. This resurgence took place under two main headings. First, the concept of contract was broadened to include the substantive right to pursue a calling, both on an individual and on a corporate level. Second, the right to make contractual arrangements to exercise one's calling became a "property" right protected from state infringement by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. As Justice Field argued in a classic formulation of this position, his dissent in the *Slaughterhouse* cases (1873),³ a butcher has a natural right to exercise his trade — contract for his services — and a state law which deprives him of his freedom to make his own arrangements (contracts) has expropriated his property rights in his enterprise. Field was even prepared to argue that such a statute constituted slavery in violation of the Thirteenth Amendment!

In effect, the old Marshallian interpretation of the contract appeared in a new guise, a far broader and more sophisticated one than the Chief Justice had ever envisioned. Instead of giving natural law attributes to contracts only, Field and his followers widened the protection to encompass the *right to enter into contracts*, that is, to the prerogative of doing business on one's own terms, which I have designated entrepreneurial liberty. And on his own

² See generally Benjamin F. Wright, *The Contract Clause in the Constitution*, (Cambridge, 1938).

³ 16 Wall. 36 (1873).

West Coast Circuit, where he was boss, Justice Field implemented his convictions in what was known as "Ninth Circuit Law." Relying on a technicality which prevented Supreme Court review of *habeas corpus* decisions, Field and his judicial associates established as constitutional law in the Ninth Circuit the proposition that the rights to pursue legitimate callings, to make and enforce contracts, and to do business free from extraordinary legislative control were incorporated in the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. In this backdoor fashion, natural entrepreneurial rights entered the Constitution.⁴

While Field never denied the existence of the police power, his whole position was based on the proposition that in any conflict between private *economic* rights and public authority the burden of proof rested on the state. The state, in other words, had to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Court that its regulations were justified. In the absence of strong historical or contextual proof of legitimacy, Field almost automatically voted "No!" but it was possible on occasion — e.g., *Barbier v. Connolly* (1885), *Soon Hing v. Crowley* (1885)⁵ — to convince him that the police power had been legitimately exercised. Yet in the area of non-economic rights (rights of Negroes, for example, to equal political treatment) he gave the police power its head.

This is not the place for a discussion of the rapid spread of Justice Field's — and Justice Bradley's — dissenting views in the *Slaughterhouse* cases. Needless to say, the conception that there was constitutional protection for the right to follow one's calling — and that the contractual arrangements made in pursuing business goals were largely immune to public authority — became the ideological *point d'appui* for the corporations in their struggle against regulation. State judges were particularly susceptible to this line of argument, and in New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and many other states the divine right of contract supplied the rationale for voiding state regulatory legislation.⁶ Contracts were the instruments by which men implemented their property rights in their economic capacities; thus legislatively to prohibit paying miners in company script, when they had agreed to this form of remuneration in their employment contracts, was to deprive the *miners* of their "property right" to make their own economic decisions. The average miner never really appreciated this judicial concern for his integrity; from his worm's-eye view a contract with the coal company was

⁴ See Howard Jay Graham, "Justice Field and the Fourteenth Amendment," *Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 52 (1943), pp. 851–889.

⁵ 113 U.S. 27 (1885); 113 U.S. 703 (1885).

⁶ See generally Clyde E. Jacobs, *Law Writers and the Courts* (Berkeley, 1954); Benjamin R. Twiss, *Lawyers and the Constitution* (Princeton, 1942).

hardly the outcome of bargaining between equals. But the judges persisted in protecting him from his own base instincts, which would have led him to become a "ward of the state" — a fate worse than death.

This judicial altruism deserves emphasis. There is no necessity to believe that the judges were insincere when they protected the furious farmers from "serfdom" by striking down legislative enactments designed to curb railroad shipping practices, or when they rescued the industrial worker from "slavery" by asserting freedom of contract in his behalf. Just as in the *Income Tax* cases (1895) communism was seen as the logical consequence of a graduated tax, so serfdom and slavery were seen as the natural end results of dependence on the state. This was the era when, under the Social Darwinist aegis, that evil abstraction The State was first loosed in the land. The conflict of the age was seen as one between The Individual and The State, and the consequences of Statism (the triumph of the weak over the strong in Spencerian terms) would be decadence and dictatorship.

The logic of this position was absurd in its own terms. As a contemporary critic like Lester F. Ward pointed out (to an empty house), if the weak succeeded in beating the strong by ganging up against them, according to the syllogism of Social Darwinism, they became the "fittest." In other words, if one argues that Nature awards the prize to the "fittest" and that the "fittest" are those who emerge on top of the pile, then the workers or farmers who successfully club down the industrial magnates with the state as their weapon deserve the Darwinian accolade. The logic of Social Darwinism was that the winner takes all; no ground rules were prescribed. What the state, and later the federal judges, did in the name of impartiality was strip the weak of their capacity for collective action. In the event that the workers did persuade the state legislature to act in their behalf, a judge would hastily blow the whistle, cancel the victory, and in the name of fair play return power to the opposition. Or, to change the analogy, the courts effectively sent the workers and the farmers into the boxing ring with the injunction that if they used their best punch on the corporations, it would be ruled a foul.⁷

Moreover, this judicial posture completely overlooked the extent to which the great private governments were in point of fact "wards of the state." Hothouse conditions were established for industrial growth by the protective tariff which in essence gave these tariff-protected industries the power to tax the American consumer. On a different level, state and federal judges were always ready to rush to the aid of a corporation which was having difficulties with a labor union — even if it was necessary, as in the *Debs* case,

⁷ See Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Philadelphia, 1945), especially Chapter 4.

to improvise a legal foundation for such intervention. Indeed, the Debs imprisonment and the Pullman Strike which led to it provide an excellent example of the extent to which the federal government would aid a private government in distress.

In May 1894, trouble broke out in the feudal demesne of George Pullman, the company town of Pullman on the outskirts of Chicago. Workers who protested against wage cuts were thrown out of their "homes"; Pullman refused even to discuss the matter, and his employees *en masse* joined Eugene Debs' American Railway Union (A.R.U.) and struck. Debs, who had led the A.R.U. to a sensational victory over the Great Northern Railroad in 1893, realized that the strike had to be handled with great care — any violence or disorder would provide the federal government with an excuse to intervene as it had in 1877. With great care and tactical brilliance, Debs masterminded a spectacular "functional revolution" against the private government of George Pullman: On June 26 the word went out along the lines to boycott the "Palace Cars" without interrupting other rail transportation. Suddenly, all over the West Pullman cars appeared quietly resting on sidings — the workers simply shunted them out of trains and left them behind.⁸

This tactic unsettled the railroads, who could hardly claim that shunting Pullman cars out of trains was "revolutionary violence," and they hastily devised a counter-tactic: They attached the United States' mail cars to the Pullmans. This hardly deterred the workers, who cut the Palace Cars out of any location in the train, so the managers took the next step: *They* refused to run any trains not made up to *their* specifications, *i.e.*, they declared war on the "public" and tied up the railroads. Knowing the close connection between the General Managers' Association and Attorney General Richard Olney, Debs had been particularly careful not to interrupt mail service; now it was stopped by the Managers themselves, though of course they assigned the blame to the A.R.U.

The national government moved into action on July 2, 1894, when at Olney's instruction an injunction was requested from the United States District Court in Chicago forbidding any interference with rail traffic into that city. Although there was no federal statute governing the matter, the Court took jurisdiction on the grounds that the strike was holding up the mails and was an unlawful restraint on interstate commerce. At this point, violence did break out — aimed at preventing the enforcement of the decree — and the next day, over the objections of the Governor of Illinois, John P. Altgeld, federal troops were moved into Chicago to break the strike. Concurrently Debs and other leaders of the A.R.U. were arrested on a shotgun

⁸ Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross* (New Brunswick, 1949), p. 121.

indictment charging them with violations of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law and contempt of court.⁹

We can not linger with the details, which have been chronicled at length by several historians. The important point for our purposes here is the flimsy legal basis on which federal intervention was founded. There simply was no federal law authorizing the Debs injunction, and it supposedly had been determined as far back as 1812 (*United States v. Hudson and Goodwin*)¹⁰ that the national government had no common-law jurisdiction; that is, that the federal authorities could not exercise punitive sanctions without statutory authority. But the Supreme Court was equal to the occasion: Justice Brewer for a unanimous Court held that the absence of specific authority was inconsequential since the "obligations which [the federal government] is under to promote the interest of all, and to prevent the wrongdoing of one resulting in injury to the general welfare, is often of itself sufficient to give it standing in court. . . ." *In re Debs* (1895).¹¹ The implication of this startling and revolutionary holding was that the federal government had an inherent power to protect the "general welfare" — a view which conservatives would later denounce as unconstitutional and communistic, but which they welcomed in 1895 when it justified the imprisonment of "Dictator Debs."

Mr. George Pullman and the General Managers' Association were obviously "wards of the state." Their right to engage in business on their own terms, allegedly founded in higher law, rested in fact on the coercive power of the government: on the injunction, which the Managers' Association significantly called a "gatling gun on paper"; and on the actual gatling guns of United States troops. But while we can, armed with the clarity of hindsight, make this assertion, the fact remains that the myth of rugged individualism dominated the constitutional ethos, seemingly unharmed, even untouched, by the corrosion of contrary data. Let us now turn to an examination of the Supreme Court's application of this dogma of entrepreneurial liberty to three areas of political economy: labor relations, rate regulation, and social legislation.

The trade union movement in both the United States and Great Britain began life with a common-law bar sinister emblazoned on its shield; it was considered as a conspiracy in restraint of trade liable to criminal prosecution, civil suit for damages, or both. While by the end of the Nineteenth century trade unions in the United States were no longer automatically illegal conspiracies, in any attempt to exercise economic power they were subject to an

⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapters 6-7; See generally, Almont Lindsay, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago, 1942).

¹⁰ 7 Cranch 32 (1812).

¹¹ 158 U.S. 564 (1895).

almost infinite number of legal harassments. The long range goal of union organizations has always been job control; that is, the power to require union membership as a condition of employment. With this, of course, goes the right of the union to recognition by management as the bargaining agent (or agents, there can be more than one union involved) for the employees. Few Nineteenth century employers were willing to accept unionization, and when the unions attempted to attain their ends by striking, they found the weight of legal precedent an almost insuperable barrier to success. I have mentioned above the fiction of equilibrium which was important in trade union litigation; here let us concentrate on a few Supreme Court decisions which exemplified the judicial approach towards industrial relations. These cases, it should be noted, are those which used "liberty of contract" as the rationale of decision — rather than those resting on the commerce power and Sherman Act.

In the wake of the Pullman strike, President Cleveland appointed a special commission to investigate railroad problems. When this body reported to the President in November 1894, it recommended, *inter alia*, that Congress take action to protect the railway workers' right to organize unions, and a bill was subsequently introduced by Congressman Erdman of Pennsylvania which included such a provision. A ferocious legislative battle ensued — the Senate killed two House versions in 1895 and 1897 — but finally in 1898 President McKinley signed the Railway Labor Act establishing the Railway Labor Board, mediation machinery, and a provision (Section 10) banning the "yellow dog" contract, the blacklist, and dismissal for union membership.¹² All this enactment accomplished was the legitimatizing of unionism on interstate railroads — essentially it superseded the feudal law of the private railroad government which had made union activity a capital offense in economic terms. In other words, it gave the railroad unions *rights of access*, but no more.

It was one thing to have such a law on the books, quite another to get it enforced. Despite widespread violations, it was not until 1907 that the first test case reached the Supreme Court (two others had aborted *en route*). William Adair, the chief of operations of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, had been indicted for firing O. B. Coppage on the ground that the latter had, in violation of his contract, joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. The railroad claimed that Section 10 of the Erdman Act was unconstitutional: first, it was not properly within Congressional authority under the commerce power to regulate labor relations; and, second, assuming it could be founded on the commerce power, the provision was a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment as an infringement

¹² See Elias Lieberman, *Unions Before the Bar* (New York, 1950), pp. 44-45.

of "liberty of contract." Our concern here is with the second of these allegations.

In *Adair v. United States* (1908),¹³ the Supreme Court sustained the railroad view by a vote of six to two. Writing for the majority, Justice Harlan first of all declared Section 10 to be a violation of the Fifth Amendment, and then for good measure he added that the power to regulate labor contracts was *not* encompassed in the commerce power. Section 10, Harlan held, was "an invasion of the personal liberty, as well as of the right of property, guaranteed by" the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad thus had the right "to prescribe the terms upon which the services of Coppage would be accepted, and it was the right of Coppage to become or not, as he chose, an employee of the railroad company upon the terms offered to him." In other words, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and Coppage "have equality of right, and any legislation that disturbs that equality is an arbitrary interference with the liberty of contract which no government can legally justify in a free land."¹⁴

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who as we shall see shortly was himself anything but flexible in his approach to the mythology of the common law, dissented on the ground that the Erdman Act was a legitimate exercise of the commerce power and that "the section (10) is, in substance, a very limited interference with freedom of contract" well within the power of Congress.¹⁵ Justice McKenna also dissented, confining himself almost wholly to the question of the commerce clause.

If the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment could be construed as banning legislative efforts to end the "yellow dog" contract on the national level, it logically followed that the equivalent provision of the Fourteenth Amendment could similarly undermine state efforts to the same end. And so the Court held in 1915 by a six to three division (*Coppage v. Kansas*).¹⁶ Justice Pitney, who replaced Harlan in 1912, continued Harlan's views but added to them a pious patina which the bluff old Kentucky Unionist never employed. In some ways the Pitney opinion in *Coppage v. Kansas* sounds like a caricature of the "rugged individualist" viewpoint written by an enemy. The right freely to enter into contracts, said the Justice, "is as essential to the laborer as to the capitalist, to the poor as to the rich." Unfortunately perhaps "wherever the right of private property exists, there must and will be inequalities of fortune; and thus it naturally happens that parties

¹³ 208 U.S. 161 (1908).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* at 172-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 191. For an example of Holmes at his ritualistic worst see his dissent in the peonage case, *Bailey v. Alabama*, 219 U.S. 219 (1911).

¹⁶ 236 U.S. 1 (1915).

negotiating about a contract are not equally hampered by circumstances.”¹⁷ Translated into English, Pitney’s cloudy legalese amounts to the statement that the poor man’s right to negotiate from weakness is as essential to him as the rich man’s right to negotiate from strength.

To ensure that his point was appreciated on the appropriate philosophical level, Pitney then turned to cosmology for what might be called the ontological proof of the validity of the “yellow dog” contract:

“And, since *it is self-evident* that, unless things are held in common, some persons must have more property than others, *it is from the nature of things* impossible to uphold freedom of contract and the right of private property without at the same time recognizing as legitimate those inequalities of fortune that are the necessary result of the exercise of those rights.” (Italics added.)¹⁸

Holmes dissented tersely; one suspects that he may have been slightly nauseated. The old warrior believed firmly that the first law of life was struggle, but he despised metaphysical efforts to demonstrate that the winners in the battle of life had received some Divine afflatus.¹⁹ Justice Day, joined by Hughes, also dissented, pointing out at some length that the Kansas statute under attack was “intended to promote the same liberty of action for the employee as the employer confessedly [through employer groups such as the General Managers’ Association] enjoys. The law should be as zealous to protect the constitutional liberty of the employee as it is to guard that of the employer.”²⁰

The third, and last, case for discussion here took the principles enounced in *Adair* and *Coppage* to their logical conclusion. The long legal struggle began in 1906 when the United Mine Workers of America (U.M.W.) struck the Hitchman Coal and Coke Company in the West Virginia panhandle. The strike was defeated and in its aftermath the company set up its own “union” which required as a condition of employment that the miners sign a “disloyalty oath” to the U.M.W. in which they promised, under penalty of dismissal, never to affiliate with that Union. In 1907 the U.M.W. began its campaign to recapture the allegiance of the miners, and the company went to court. Without going into the intricate legal details, the company asked for and received an injunction prohibiting the U.M.W. from attempting to organize its workers — such an effort, even though it was peaceful, amounted to a conspiracy to induce breach of contract. Indeed,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14, 17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

Judge Dayton forbade the Union from employing "argument, reason and persuasion" with the Hitchman workers; he actually barred union organizers from "talking to" the men.

This "temporary" injunction was in effect until 1912, when Judge Dayton finally got around to a decision on the merits. (In injunctive proceedings, there are various stages: in the first, a preliminary injunction can be issued on an *ex parte* basis — that is, one party threatened by immediate damage, can get a freeze order; in the second, which is an adversary proceeding, both parties present argument and the judge decides whether or not there is an adequate case for continuing the freeze; in the third, if the preliminary injunction has been made temporary at the second state, the judge holds a full trial on the merits and reaches a final determination.) To the surprise of no one, Judge Dayton made the injunction permanent — which meant that any efforts to unionize Hitchman would be punishable as contempt of court. However, the Union was pleased and startled when, two years later (the organizers had now been barred from the mines for seven years), the Court of Appeals over-ruled Judge Dayton at every point. Hitchman promptly appealed to the Supreme Court.²¹

The Supreme Court, in 1917 (*Hitchman Coal & Coke Co. v. Mitchell*),²² split six to three in favor of the Company. Justice Pitney for the Court had no difficulty fitting the Hitchman situation into his cosmology: If the "yellow dog" contract had Divine sanction, then it was self-evident in the nature of things that the Union's efforts were sacrilegious. The injunction was sustained and the labor movement was effectively barred from ever attempting to organize workers who had signed "yellow dog" contracts — any effort to this end would automatically fall into the category of a conspiracy to achieve an illegal end, breach of contract. The right of union organizers even to freedom of speech was held to be subordinate to the sanctity of contractual obligations.

Justice Brandeis wrote a sharp dissent for himself, Justice Holmes, and Justice Clarke. In essence, Brandeis denied every contention of the majority: The U.M.W. was a legal body employing legal means to achieve a legal end. While he did not question the validity of the "yellow dog" contract, Brandeis pointed out that dismissal was a consequence of joining a union, not of talking about or preparing to join the union. Brandeis' views were warmly greeted by the unions as well as by progressives generally, but the employers had the majority and set to work with it.²³

In tactical terms, the opinion of the Court enshrined the injunction as

²¹ Lieberman, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-95.

²² 245 U.S. 229 (1917).

²³ *Ibid.*, 263.

the primary weapon against unionization. And it was a devastating weapon. In the first place, as we have seen in *Hitchman*, the procedures were such that, once a temporary injunction had been granted, years might pass before final determination of the issues. Throughout this period the injunction remained in force undermining any sustained organizing campaign. If the union organizers decided to ignore the injunction and go ahead with their drive (even today, with all the conveniences of the National Labor Relations Acts, a unionization campaign calls for sustained, continuous effort), they were promptly arrested for contempt of court. Under the Clayton Act of 1914, they had the right to a jury trial; but jury or no jury, they went out of circulation in the sense that their work for the union ceased. In managerial circles the injunction was rated higher than a regiment of national guardsmen. In psychological terms, the onus for "breaking the law" was always on the unions; a refusal to obey even the most openly bitter anti-labor judge left the unionists under these circumstances in "defiance of the Constitution."

When the Supreme Court incorporated what I have called the dogma of entrepreneurial freedom into the Fourteenth Amendment, it crippled the efforts of the trade unions to organize. In a different sector of the economy this potent concept was at work undermining the efforts of state and local governments to regulate the rates charged by utilities, railroads, and similar corporations. Probably no area of public law is more complex than that concerned with the determination of "reasonable" rates, and we shall not get involved in the substantive problems. Our concern is rather with the antecedent question: Who shall have the power to evaluate the "reasonableness" of rates? What might be called the administrative school of thought, which was on the rise in the years we are discussing, asserted that the determination of rates was a legislative-administrative problem, one which could be handled intelligently only by a body of experts acting under state authority. In this tradition various states established railroad or public utility commissions with rate-fixing powers. The other school of thought asserted that only a judicial body could exercise jurisdiction over "reasonableness," that historically the concept of a "reasonable return" was a common law derivative, that for the legislature to meddle in the area was a violation of the separation of powers, and thus of due process of law.

All utilities are inherently quasi-public in character, and under the old rules of the common law they were subjected to a special degree of control by the sovereign. A railroad, for example, was given a public charter, trolleys operated on the streets by franchise, gas companies ran their pipes with public assent. No one has a natural or civil right to build a railroad any more than he can convert his suburban backyard into a stone quarry or an airport.

Throughout the middle years of the Nineteenth century the police power was dominant over the assertion of vested rights, and in 1877 the Supreme Court in the so-called *Granger* cases,²⁴ appeared to give the states the green light for vigorous regulation of "businesses affected with a public interest." The *Granger* cases are fascinating reading; the first, *Munn v. Illinois*, is characteristically quoted in case books, but there were eight cases decided *en masse* (with Justice Field in bitter opposition) which effectively undercut every line of attack that corporations could launch against the police power, at least in the constitutional sense. In the leading case, Illinois was permitted to establish maximum storage rates for grain elevators; in the remaining cases a wide range of legislative railroad regulation was approved, including freight and passenger rates. Chief Justice Waite flatly and virtually without discussion rejected the contention that the states could not regulate interstate railroads; he suggested that if various citizens did not like the substance of the regulations, they should go into politics and get the legislature to change its laws. These decisions, barked Field in dissent, "practically destroy all the guarantees of the Constitution and of the common law . . . for the protection of the railroad companies." The nub of the controversy was the locus of authority to define "reasonable" rates: The corporations asserted that only by a judicial proceeding could this be done — a judge, or a judge and jury, would then decide in a specific case whether the company had overcharged. The states, with the Court's agreement, felt that the evaluation of fair and reasonable rate structures was within the jurisdiction of the legislature — either directly or through delegation to a commission.

From the corporate viewpoint, there were several lines of possible assault on the *Granger* decisions. For the railroads, in particular, the claim could be made that state regulation was an intrusion into Congress' power over interstate commerce. In the absence of any commerce power issue, the corporations could keep chewing away at the police power on several grounds and hope that one or another Justice would be converted, or that new judges coming on the bench would accept their views. There was always hope that the Contract clause could be revived; Justice Field was constantly recommending the useful potentialities of the Fourteenth Amendment; and there were even odd-ball decisions such as Justice Miller's in *Loan Association v. Topeka* (1875)²⁵ which suggested that the Court could find a basis in natural law for frustrating "robbery" carried on under the auspices of the police power. Moreover, the vital statistics of the Court were morbidly reassuring:

²⁴ 94 U.S. 113 (1877).

²⁵ 20 Wall. 655 (1875). It should be noted that Miller used this improvisation to strike down, not support "privilege."

In the decade following the *Granger* cases (1877), five new Justices were appointed to the Court, all from legal and professional backgrounds which suggested they would take seriously the threat to property rights.

With this transformation of the Court in mind, let us turn to the famous case of *Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Co. v. Minnesota* (1890)²⁶ in which the Supreme Court began the retreat from the *Granger* cases. Minnesota had set up a railroad commission charged by the legislature with ensuring that the roads exacted only "equal and reasonable rates," and this commission had ordered the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul to lower its charges for hauling milk. Writing for the six-judge majority, Justice Blatchford neatly side-stepped *Munn v. Illinois*, holding that the determination of a "reasonable" rate could not be delegated to a non-judicial body such as a commission. "The question of the reasonableness of a rate of charge for transportation [he asserted] is eminently a question for judicial decision."²⁷ In essence, Blatchford announced that no administrative (and by implication, legislative — legislatures do not operate "under the forms" supplied "by the wisdom of successive ages for the investigation judicially" of controversial issues) determination of a rate schedule could never be final. He issued an invitation to any railroad or utility grieved by legal rate schedules to take the issue of "reasonableness" to court. Perhaps caught up by the spirit of the age, the Justice declared a judicial corner on "reasonableness," and would permit no unsanctified legislative body to infringe the monopoly.

Four years later Justice Brewer — Field's nephew, and if possible a stronger supporter of entrepreneurial freedom than his uncle — filled in the gaps in Blatchford's argument. Under review was a schedule of rates prepared, *after notice and hearings*, by the Texas Railroad Commission which were challenged as "unreasonable" by a railroad bondholder. Conceding that the Court could not itself go into the rate-making business, Brewer made it perfectly clear that the Justices knew "unreasonable" rates when they saw them. A railroad had a constitutional right to charge enough to defray its expenses and make some return to its investors: "justice demands that every one should receive some compensation for the use of his money or property, if it be possible without prejudice to the rights of others." Brewer was a bit vague on the constitutional basis of this right to make a profit, but he seems to have tucked it into the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment: "The equal protection of the laws — the spirit of common justice — forbids that one class [railroad bondholders] should by law be compelled to suffer loss that others [shippers] may make gain."²⁸

²⁶ 134 U.S. 418 (1890).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 461.

²⁸ *Reagan v. Farmer's Loan & Trust Co.*, 154 U.S. 362, 412, 410 (1894).

If one recalls the fantastic financial operations of the railways in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth century, the problem comes into better focus. The common prank of the financiers was overcapitalization — a railroad with a cash value of a million dollars would be capitalized at two million, bonds would be issued calling for 4 or 5 per cent return, and rates would be fixed at a level which would, hopefully, bring this or better. In California in the 1870's, the Southern Pacific Railroad was bitterly contesting its valuation for tax purposes at \$16,500 per mile as confiscatory, but was capitalized at \$43,500 per mile!²⁹ Now the question arises: Which figure should be used to compute a "reasonable" rate? If the railroad commission employs the net value of the property, the rates necessary to provide a "fair return" will be considerably below those which would be derived from using the capitalized value of the property. Assuming that a 5 per cent return is considered "reasonable," and we continue the fictitious example above of the one million dollar railroad capitalized at two millions, a fair rate in the first instance would bring in \$50,000 a year, in the second, \$100,000. In practical terms, freight and passenger charges would have to be doubled to sustain the two million rate-base.

Turn this proposition around and another dimension, basic to the cases under discussion, becomes obvious. A railroad, overcapitalized let us say by 50 per cent — a fifteen million dollar indebtedness on a ten million cash outlay — in order to stay solvent must pay its bondholders a total of \$600,000 a year, assuming a 4 per cent coupon. But a state railroad commission, after careful assessment of the net value of the actual assets of the line, fixes a rate schedule which cannot earn more than \$450,000 in profits. Has the commission acted "unreasonably?" The answer to this question is not founded on legal doctrine, but on economic and political presuppositions. If a judge adopts the ruthless view of classic *laissez-faire* economics, he will doubtless hold that the investor has the job of anticipating future risks and acting accordingly, that it is not the task of the judiciary to rescue bondholders from the penalties of economic stupidity. If the judge believes that it is the function of the state to protect the public from extortion, he will unquestionably accept the decision of the railroad commission as binding on the corporation.

However, to return to the main line of the argument, if the judge believes that the well-being of the investor and the liberty of action of the entrepreneur are the key social and economic values, he will defend the corporation's inflated rate-base against both economic rationality and the police power. It was this course which the Supreme Court took in the 1890's and

²⁹ Cited in Howard Jay Graham, "An Innocent Abroad: The Constitutional Corporate 'Person,'" *U.C.L.A. Law Review*, Vol. 2 (1955), p. 191.

early decades of this century. As time went by, the judicial weapon became more precise: indeed, in 1930 the Court was able to state, *ex cathedra*, that a Baltimore trolley company had a constitutional right to a return of 7.44 per cent on the value of its property!³⁰ Presumably 7.43 per cent would have been a deprivation of due process.

What is important to note is that the Court assumed, without any justification, that the restrictions of due process on the state's police power were identical with the restrictions on its power of eminent domain.³¹ Once this analogy was established, the fight was over — the conclusions were subsumed in the premises. Now it is quite clear that the state acting under its power of eminent domain must reimburse the citizen fair value for his property. If a house is condemned to make room for a superhighway, its owner is entitled to full reimbursement of his investment. *But the police power does not proceed on the same basis.* One may have paid a thousand dollars for an ounce of the best heroin, but if it is seized by the state there will be no compensation. Nor do prohibition laws respect a man's property right in alcoholic beverages. The only due process a heroin pusher or a bootlegger can expect is procedural: He has the right to a fair trial in criminal court. He has no right to a 7.44 per cent return on his investment.

Thus if one begins with the assumption that the State of Texas, or Minnesota, in establishing regulations governing railroad rates, was limiting the corrupt endeavors of corporate officials and protecting the public from institutionalized embezzlement and extortion, the Supreme Court's decisions amounted to a protection of criminal behavior. Indeed, this was the way many agrarian radicals and urban progressives interpreted the work of the Court. However, from the viewpoint of Justice Field, Justice Brewer, or the seven other Justices who *unanimously* concurred in the Texas holding discussed above (*Reagan v. Farmers' Loan and Trust Co.*, 1894), this criticism was a form of blasphemy. And it should be reiterated that they were honest, dedicated men — dedicated to the proposition that entrepreneurial rights were a mundane manifestation of natural law, and to its Siamese twin which holds that those who would lay profane hands on corporate prerogatives were the harbingers of socialistic serfdom.

Before the Court could with confidence invoke a precise fraction such as 7.44 per cent, there had to be a formula. As Robert L. Hale pointed out many years ago,³² the process of formulation was rather peculiar. The Court in fact began with the "right" answer, and then had to work backwards to the "right" question. The answer as we have seen was that a utility had the

³⁰ *United R'ways & Electric Co. of Baltimore v. West*, 280 U.S. 234 (1930).

³¹ See Robert L. Hale, *Freedom Through Law* (New York, 1952), pp. 461-73.

³² *Ibid.*, Chapter 15 *passim*.

right to a "fair return" or a "reasonable return" on its investment. But what was to be the rate-base, the foundation on which any hypothetical "fair return" would be computed? In 1899 the question for this answer was formulated by Justice Harlan in *Smythe v. Ames*.³³

This is not the place to investigate the chaos which for half a century developed in the wake of the "rule of *Smythe v. Ames*"; nor are we here concerned with the circular logic which sustained it (earning power is a key consideration in "value"; thus to diminish the earning power by rate restrictions is automatically to reduce the "value").³⁴ Its importance lay in the enormous freedom it gave to public utilities and the almost infinite number of roadblocks it put in the way of effective state regulation. No matter how much work a group of utility experts had put into the determination of a rate-scale based on a "fair value," once this schedule had been promulgated by a regulatory commission, an inevitable trip was taken to the federal court. There the whole question was argued *de novo* with the Supreme Court reserving the right to throw out any set of regulations that did not insure a "reasonable" return on "fair value" as violative of the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. And while this argument was, of course, conducted in precise legal terminology, it was in essence an elaborate exercise in constitutional mysticism. As Justice Stone, discussing one component of Harlan's formula, observed many years later: "In assuming the task of determining judicially the present fair replacement value of the vast properties of public utilities, courts have been projected into the most speculative undertaking imposed upon them in the entire history of English jurisprudence."³⁵

The constitutional dogma of entrepreneurial liberty thus simultaneously crippled the power of the trade unions to achieve recognition and bargaining status and undermined the authority of the state over public utilities. In both instances, the natural right to conduct business on one's own terms was incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment. Let us now turn to the third dogmatic manifestation: the employment of "liberty of contract" as a weapon against social legislation. It would be wise at this point to re-emphasize a definitional matter which is relevant here, serving to distinguish this category of legislative interference from the one just examined. No public utility could ever, even in the view of a judge as committed to entrepreneurial liberty as Stephen J. Field, justify in legal terms full freedom from special regulation. These "quasi-public" enterprises — railroads, turn-

³³ 169 U.S. 466, 546-7 (1898).

³⁴ See Hale, *op. cit.*, pp. 416ff.

³⁵ Cited *ibid.* p. 478. (from *West v. Chesapeake & Potomac Tel. Co.*), 295 U.S. 662, 689 (1935).

piques, traction companies, gas and water distributors — were designated as businesses “affected with a public interest” and were theoretically far more subordinate to the police power than “private” undertakings. The category of businesses “affected with a public interest” was, however, not simple to define. In the *Granger* cases, Chief Justice Waite ducked the definitional issue by suggesting that it lay within the jurisdiction of the state legislature; Field retorted that to do so would leave the entire business world at the mercy of meddling legislation, that it would permit legislative interference on a self-validating basis and effectively destroy the line between “quasi-public” and private enterprise.

In his dissent in the *Munn* case, Field argued that the State of Illinois had no right to regulate the charges of an admittedly monopolistic combine of grain elevator operators. This monopoly, he declared, was an outgrowth of their entrepreneurial talent, not of state action; therefore there was nothing “quasi-public” about their actions. He was infuriated by the Chief Justice’s statement that property “becomes clothed with a public interest when it is used in such a manner as to be of public consequence and affect the community at large.” Logically Field’s argument was sound — Waite’s definition was circular — but for the time being he had to bide his time and merely register his protests in choleric dissents. And it should be added, just to maintain the right atmosphere of ambiguity, that the Chief Justice was forced to hedge his bet: in 1886 (*Stone v. Farmers’ Loan & Trust Co.*) while sustaining the actions of Mississippi’s railroad commission, he added by way of dictum that “it is not to be inferred that this [regulatory power] is itself without limit. This power to regulate is not a power to destroy, and limitation is not the equivalent of confiscation.”³⁶ In short, Waite too had to admit that there were situations where the legislative power could be checked by judicial application of the Fourteenth Amendment.

While the Court was undergoing the personnel shift discussed earlier, the drums of reform were beating throughout the land. Under pressure from Populists and urban progressives, state legislatures began to enact social legislation designed to ameliorate some of the worst evils of corporate power and industrial squalor. In most instances these statutes had to run the gauntlet of due process in the state courts before they entered the federal forum. While I have not, for reasons of space, devoted coverage to decisions

³⁶ 116 U.S. 307, 331 (1886). Professor C. Peter Magrath, whose forthcoming biography of Chief Justice Waite will fill a real gap, has been good enough to supply me with material from the Waite Papers which indicate that the Chief Justice inserted this dictum to hold Justice Stanley Matthews in the majority. The decision was 5-3; had Matthews swung the other way, the decision below in favor of the *railroads* would have been sustained by an equally divided Court (4-4). In short, Waite’s abstract genuflection to entrepreneurial liberty did not symbolize a change of heart, but rather a tactical compromise, on his part.

of the inferior federal or state courts, it would be wise at this point to note that the precepts of entrepreneurial liberty gained support on the state judicial level before they did in the federal jurisdiction. The vehicle for this judicial offensive was the due process clause of state constitutions. The courts of Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania were particularly vigorous in their exposition of the Field-Bradley gloss on due process as set out in the *Slaughter-House* cases (1873).³⁷

Let us examine one extremely significant New York decision, *In re Jacobs* (1885),³⁸ for the path that it broke, a path which the United States Supreme Court took in several later decisions. The *Tenement House Cigar* case, as it was called, arose from a New York statute of 1884. Trimmed to the essentials, this law prohibited the manufacture of cigars or other tobacco products on the dwelling floors of tenements (four or more family habitations) in cities of more than 500,000 population (Brooklyn and New York). Like many other pieces of social legislation then and now, it was passed on an *ad hoc* basis, by cigar-smoking legislators, and a cigar-smoking Governor, Grover Cleveland, after a newspaper exposé of the filthy conditions of cigar manufacture. Cigars were then made by hand and the wrapper was sealed by the cigarmaker in a primitive and unhygienic fashion — he licked it with his tongue. As the legislators learned of the squalid environment and the high disease rate of tenement dwellers (tuberculosis was endemic), they rushed to protect the public health from this menace.

An obscure cigarmaker named Peter Jacobs violated the law, was arrested and convicted, appealed, and then vanished from history.³⁹ At this point in the process, the poverty-stricken defendant turned the matter over to the highest-priced lawyer in New York, William M. Evarts. Evarts took his responsibilities to the cigarmakers seriously, and presented to the New York Supreme Court a brief arguing that the state law violated the due process clause of the New York Constitution by arbitrarily depriving tenement-house cigarmakers of their livelihood. The Supreme Court agreed with Evarts, and the State appealed to the Court of Appeals (New York's highest tribunal). Here Evarts rang all the changes on entrepreneurial freedom, invoking due process, freedom of contract, and even natural law. He denied that the statute was a health measure; on the contrary, it was a discriminatory piece of class legislation *disguised as a health measure*. Carried away by his compassion for the small entrepreneur, Evarts even saw the evil hand of monopolistic capital behind the bill: it would place "the whole industry under the domination of organized capital and combination on the one

³⁷ *Jacobs, op. cit.*, Ch. 3 *passim*.

³⁸ 98 N.Y. 98 (N.Y., Ct. of Appeals, 1885).

³⁹ See Twiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-109.

hand, and lays it open on the other to unrestrained domination of trade unions."⁴⁰

Not only did the Court of Appeals accept Evarts' contentions, but Judge Earl virtually wrote his decision from Evarts' brief — which in turn plagiarized extensively from the earlier dissents of Justices Field and Bradley. Speaking for a unanimous Court, Earl agreed that the law arbitrarily deprived the cigarmakers of their property rights in their calling and of liberty as well. The Court gave short shrift to the allegation that this was a health measure — there was no evidence that manufacturing cigars was bad for the health — and added:

Under the mere guise of police regulations, personal rights and private property cannot be arbitrarily invaded, and the determination of the legislature is not final or conclusive. If it passes an act ostensibly for the public health, and thereby destroys or takes away the property of the citizen, or interferes with his personal liberty, then it is for the courts to scrutinize the act and see whether it really relates to and is convenient and appropriate to promote the public health.⁴¹

To show that it meant business, the same Court six months later uncovered another arbitrary interference with property rights disguised as a health measure — this time an act prohibiting the manufacture of butter substitutes.⁴²

Both the late Benjamin R. Twiss and Clyde E. Jacobs have discussed at length the spread of the dogma of entrepreneurial liberty in the state courts and there is no need, or room, here to recapitulate their findings. It is an index of the extent of this phenomenon in the state jurisdiction that when the first important case came before the United States Supreme Court in 1898 (*Holden v. Hardy*) those opposing the statute involved pointed out that in fourteen states similar enactments had been declared unconstitutional! *In re Jacobs* became one of the most extensively cited cases in legal history.

In 1897, in a case of little significance here (*Allgeyer v. Louisiana*),⁴³ the Supreme Court squarely affirmed the doctrine of liberty of contract and voided a state insurance regulation which impinged on this "property" right. Then in 1898 came the first big test in the area of "social legislation," *Holden v. Hardy*.⁴⁴ A Utah statute of 1896 penalized any employer who required more than an eight-hour day of underground miners or smelter

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁴¹ 98 N.Y. 98, 110 (1885).

⁴² *People v. Marx*, 99 N.Y. 377 (N.Y., Ct. of Appeals, 1885). Cited in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 55. See generally, Roscoe Pound, "Liberty of Contract," *Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 18 (1909), p. 454.

⁴³ 165 U.S. 578 (1897).

⁴⁴ 169 U.S. 366 (1898).

workers. Holden violated the law and upon arrest filed a petition for *habeas corpus*. He claimed that since the statute was unconstitutional, he was illegally imprisoned and, getting no succor from the Utah courts, appealed to the Supreme Court. The Utah enactment, he asserted, was a regulation of hours of employment disguised as a health measure; it was an arbitrary infringement on entrepreneurial liberty which hid under the cloak of the police power. But, despite the pressure which had built up in the state and lower federal courts, the Supreme Court sustained the eight-hour law, though on a very narrow basis. Writing for the seven-Justice majority, Justice Brown held that traditionally the states had special police jurisdiction over dangerous employments and that the Utah law fell into this category. The problem, Brown suggested, was at root factual; that is, the Court had the task of examining the facts in any specific case and determining whether "there are reasonable grounds for believing that [special health regulation for an industry] is supported by the facts . . . or whether [legislative] action be a mere excuse for an unjust discrimination, or the oppression, or spoliation of a particular class."⁴⁵ In short, Justice Brown accepted the premise of *In re Jacobs*, but denied its applicability to the matter *sub judice*.

Justices Rufus Wheeler Peckham and David Brewer dissented without opinion, but it is not difficult to project their views. Brewer we have already identified as Stephen Field's nephew and a fanatical fighter for entrepreneurial freedom of action; Peckham was a graduate of the reactionary New York Court of Appeals. And although the Court's opinion in *Holden v. Hardy* had rejected their view of the merits, it had endorsed their presuppositions. Underground miners were a hard test of their principle; they had to accept Holmes' view that hard cases make bad law and await a better opportunity. One was shortly forthcoming.

In 1897, following another series of newspaper articles exposing the foul conditions in bakeries, the New York legislature passed a statute which was designed to deal comprehensively with the problems of the baking industry. Although a health measure in form, in substance it was more; after the success of the Utah eight-hour law (which had been promoted by the Western Federation of Miners), the trade unions decided to press for regulation of working hours as part of the "health" package — similarly the Cigarmakers Union had supported the statute voided in *In re Jacobs*. In addition to requiring bakeries to install sanitary equipment and follow (from our view in the middle of the Twentieth century) minimal health standards — "Every such bakery shall be provided with a proper wash room and water closet . . . apart from the bakeroom"⁴⁶ — the enactment stated that "no employee

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* at 398.

⁴⁶ The statute is cited in *Lochner v. New York*, 198 U.S. 45, 110 (1905).

shall be required or permitted to work . . . more than sixty hours in one week, or more than ten hours in any one day."

The New York courts sustained the act as a valid exercise of the state's power and *Lochner* appealed to the Supreme Court. The decks were cleared and the Court was confronted with the one key issue: Was the New York statute a "health" law? In the light of Justice Brown's remarks in *Holden v. Hardy*, both sides presented briefs designed to base their cases on the "facts." Indeed Julius Mayer, for the State, submitted what later became known as a "Brandeis Brief": an elaborate study of the vital statistics of bakers to demonstrate that special measures were justified to protect the health of this category of workers. Bakers, he urged, were like underground miners or smelter operators, engaged in a "dangerous trade"; thus *Holden v. Hardy* was binding.

Justice Peckham wrote the opinion of the Court for the five-judge majority. Precisely speaking, he held that the New York law was not a "health" measure but an unconstitutional violation of liberty of contract. Broadly construed, and his language was such as to encourage broad construction, he denounced all efforts to limit entrepreneurial freedom in the name of the public health and welfare. His opinion, in fact, was little less than a tirade against "social legislation"; he was determined not to permit the camel's nose under the tent:

If this statute be valid, and if, therefore, a proper case is made out in which to deny the right of an individual, *sui juris* [legally competent], as employer or employee, to make contracts for the labor of the latter . . . there would seem to be no length to which legislation of this nature might not go.⁴⁷

Disregarding any statistics to the contrary, Peckham then announced that there could be "fair doubt that the trade of the baker" was particularly unhealthy — it was healthier than some, and less healthy than others. With some sardonic cruelty he pointed out that "very likely physicians would not recommend the exercise of that or of any other trade as a remedy for ill health," and that "it might safely be affirmed that almost all occupations more or less affect the health . . . labor, even in any department, may possibly carry with it the seeds of unhealthiness." Thus if the state law was upheld, "No trade, no occupation, no mode of earning one's living could escape this all pervading power, and the acts of the legislative in limiting the hours of labor in all employments would be valid, although such limitations might seriously cripple the ability of the laborer to support himself and his family."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* at 58.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* at 59, 64.

It is a great temptation to quote at length from this incredible holding — which in truth reads like a Marxist parody of capitalist principles — but the tone, the temper, and the law have all been conveyed by these excerpts. One final matter deserving notice is Peckham's general bull of excommunication; after listing a number of state court decisions invalidating "social legislation," he concluded: "It is impossible for us to shut our eyes to the fact that many of the laws of this character, while passed under what is claimed to be the police power for the purpose of protecting the public health or welfare, are, in reality, passed from other [and by implication unconstitutional] motives."⁴⁹ This was nothing less than an invitation to aggrieved entrepreneurs to bring their legislative woes to the Supreme Court for principled redress.

Justice Harlan wrote a dissent which was joined by White and Day in which, drawing from the New York brief, he argued that the facts indicated that baking was a dangerous trade and consequently the rule of *Holden v. Hardy* should be determining. Separately dissenting, Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote one of his classic little feuilletons in which he seemingly rejected the judicial function as viewed by *both* Peckham and Harlan. "The Fourteenth Amendment," he noted caustically, "does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's Social Statics" and the job of the Court was not to prescribe a political economy for the people, one way or the other: "I strongly believe that my agreement or disagreement [with the principles of "social legislation"] has nothing to do with the right of a majority to embody their opinions in law." Holmes succinctly, with his usual flair for epigrammatic prose, concluded:

"[A Constitution] is made for people of fundamentally differing views, and the accident of our finding certain opinions natural and familiar, or novel, and even shocking, ought not to conclude our judgment upon the question whether statutes embodying them conflict with the Constitution of the United States.

"General propositions [e.g., liberty of contract] do not decide concrete cases. The decisions will depend on a judgment or intuition more subtle than any articulate major premise. . . . Every opinion tends to become a law. I think that the word "liberty," in the 14th Amendment, is perverted when it is held to prevent the natural outcome of a dominant opinion, *unless it can be said that a rational and fair man necessarily would admit that the statute proposed would infringe fundamental principles as they have been understood by the traditions of our people and our law.*" (Italics added.)⁵⁰

This dissent has been widely hailed as a rejection of the theory that the Court should intervene to substitute its views on economic, or political pol-

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* at 65.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* at 75-6.

icy for those of a state legislature, or Congress. Careful reading of the section I have italicized indicates, however, that Holmes too hedged his bet. He did not deny that there might be circumstances when the Court should reject state regulations as violative of due process. In fact, in Holmes' thirty years on the Court, the Justices declared state action to be in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment 174 times, and Holmes only dissented in forty-three.⁵¹ In other words, Holmes was not opposed to judicial oversight *per se*, but he was ready to give the wisdom of the legislature far greater weight than most of his colleagues. To some extent he identified legal theory with autobiography: who is his "rational and fair man" if not a wise and sceptical old historian of the common law who has looked death in the face in battle, and recognizes with the Preacher that "all is Vanity"?

For years Populists, progressives, and Socialists had been demanding that the Supreme Court's authority be circumscribed — William Jennings Bryan had made a campaign issue of the Court's power in 1896⁵² — but the *Lochner* case also led enlightened conservatives into the ranks of the critics. Even Charles Warren, a constitutional scholar as eminent for his vehement endorsement of judicial review as for his meticulous historical work, was unable to find a good word for Peckham's holding,⁵³ and the latter was denounced in season and out by the ever-swelling group of distinguished intellectuals, lawyers, and social workers who were spearheading the drive for social legislation.

However, *Lochner* was law and Peckham's views went forth as an authoritative pronouncement on the meaning of due process — even though the shift of one judge could lead to a different determination of similar matters in later litigation. The New York Court of Appeals, in particular, took the words of its alumnus seriously: if *Lochner* was a caricature of myopic entrepreneurial principles, the New York decisions in *People v. Williams* (1907)⁵⁴ and *Ives v. South Buffalo Railway Co.* (1911)⁵⁵ were caricatures of a caricature. In the former case, a New York law prescribing a ten-hour day and prohibiting night work for women *only* was voided, and in the latter, a very moderate (by later standards) Workmen's Compensation Law was invalidated; both enactments were unconstitutional limitations on entrepreneurial freedom. Whatever may have been the legal niceties (*Holden v.*

⁵¹ My computation from data presented in Felix Frankfurter, *Mr. Justice Holmes and the Supreme Court* (Cambridge, 1938), Appendix I.

⁵² See Alan F. Westin, "The Supreme Court, the Populist Movement, and the Election of 1896," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 15 (1953) p. 3.

⁵³ See his curt observation in *Congress, the Constitution, and the Supreme Court* (Boston, 1925), p. 236, and in "The Progressiveness of the Supreme Court," *Columbia Law Review*, Vol. 13 (1913), p. 294.

⁵⁴ 189 N.Y. 131 (N.Y., Ct. of Appeals, 1907).

⁵⁵ 201 N.Y. 271 (N.Y., Ct. of Appeals, 1911).

Hardy was, of course, still good law for relevant categories of employment), *Lochner* appeared to be a virtually impregnable barrier to the enactment of effective factory legislation.

There was one hopeful sign, but it was hard to know its portent. In 1908 (*Muller v. Oregon*),⁵⁶ the Supreme Court unexpectedly sustained an Oregon statute which forbade employers to contract for more than a ten-hour day with women factory workers. The unanimous Court, without in any way undermining or challenging the validity of *Lochner v. New York*, revived *Holden v. Hardy* and held it applicable. Women, said Justice Brewer, are different — as everyone knows — and the Court takes “judicial cognizance of all matters of general knowledge.”⁵⁷ In the brief presented for Oregon, Louis D. Brandeis had set forth at elaborate length historical and contemporary evidence that women were entitled to special protection (the first “Brandeis Brief”): since there were two perfectly good precedents, one (*Holden v. Hardy*) which would validate the statute, and the other (*Lochner v. New York*) which would invalidate it, Brandeis concentrated on a factual presentation to lead the Court into the right category. The extent of his success can be gauged by the unanimity of the Justices and by the fact that Brewer wrote the opinion — though Paul Freund has suggested that Brewer always exhibited “marked sympathy for womenkind,” which may have provided a special feature in this case.⁵⁸ At any rate, for whatever it may be worth, the Supreme Court did assert as a constitutional principle that women were different, thus providing some foothold for social legislation.

To conclude this analysis, we can summarize by stating that in the period from roughly 1890 to World War I a new principle became entrenched in American constitutional law: the doctrine of entrepreneurial liberty. Essentially this doctrine was a break with the common law and the common law premise of the overriding interest of the community, or police power. The right to use one's property, to exercise one's calling, was given a natural law foundation — in a philosophically vulgar fashion — over and above the authority of the society to enforce the common weal. The consequence of this doctrine was not a *laissez-faire* universe, but one dominated by private governments which demanded (and to a great extent received) freedom for their activities and restraints on the actions of their competitors, *e.g.*, trade unions, regulatory commissions, or reform legislatures. In historical terms, “free enterprise” thus involved two concomitant propositions: freedom of the entrepreneur to follow his calling, and a governmental, constitutional protection of the entrepreneur from his institutional enemies, public and

⁵⁶ 208 U.S. 412 (1908).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* at 421.

⁵⁸ Paul A. Freund, *On Understanding the Supreme Court* (Boston, 1951), p. 126.

private. We can get the full flavor of the *Zeitgeist* by concluding with the entrepreneurial benediction pronounced in July, 1902, by George F. Baer, President of the Reading Railroad:

The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for — not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of the country. . . .⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Cited in Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York, 1956), p. 160.

THE FARMERS' PROBLEMS: THE SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL ROOTS

The following article is a survey of the transformation of farm life and farm attitudes over the course of American history. Written by Paul H. Johnstone (Senior Agricultural Historian for the Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare in the U.S. Department of Agriculture), it has remained unjustly obscure because it resides in the little-known *Yearbook of Agriculture* for 1940. Johnstone's treatment is unusual in that it avoids sentimentalizing American farmers' "plight." It highlights instead their painful ambivalence toward conflicting values and ideals, an ambivalence that has made American farmers among the most persistently discontented groups in our society.

The urban-country conflict has been a continuing theme in agricultural discontent. It may well have been the dominant issue in the elections of 1896 and 1928. [See Nixon, pp. 202ff. and Hofstadter, pp. 420ff., below.] It is the crux of the recent controversy over reapportionment of election districts. The political character of the conflict, however, has undergone sharp change. As late as 1896, the country districts were the principal source of populist "radicalism." By 1928, farmers' discontents had begun showing up increasingly in the form of an ugly authoritarian militancy, and generally the political power of the farming community had become committed to the most conservative forces in American society. According to some of the recent literature on "status politics" [see D. Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (paperback edition, 1964); and Woodward, pp. 215ff., below], farmers' behavior in the last half century would appear to reflect status anxieties even more than specific economic grievances.

Almost from the beginning, American farmers have lived with certain contradictions that have made it difficult for them to square their ideals with their predicament. Their modern "plight" is only an aggravated form of an early condition. Long before they became a minority segment of the population, farmers complained of political impotence. Long before their industry came to represent only a fractional part of the national product, their economic needs appeared neglected. Scornful of city ways and suspicious of city people, they came to emulate urban values and to anguish over their failure to measure up to city standards of elegance and success. Almost unique in western civilization for taking pride in farming as a way of life, American farmers have been equally distinctive for regarding their land as well as their produce as objects of commerce.

Many observers have made a special point of the farmers' loss of their independence and the transformation of farming from a prideful way of life to a mean way of making a living. Other occupations than farming were "casualties" of industrialism in this respect. [See, e.g., J. R. Commons, "American Shoemakers, 1648-1895," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (Fall 1909). R. Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (1955) pp. 155-163, makes a similar point about lawyers.] But the farming community and its partisans among reformers and intellectuals have lamented the development most persistently and with greater political consequence. Especially in the last half century since agriculture has ceased to represent the major sector of the American economy, farm spokesmen have pressed their claims for governmental favor largely on the grounds of farming's value to society as a source of stability and virtue. [See especially A. W. Griswold, *Farming and Democracy* (1948).]

The irony is that however highly farmers may have placed self-sufficiency among the values they cherished, most of the evidence of agricultural history argues that American farmers, particularly midwestern and western ones, have been among the least independent groups in the society; their dependency, moreover, has been largely a function of their own ambitions. They have been prey, it is true, to the vagaries of government land policy. They have had to draw capital from bankers hundreds of miles away. And the value of their assets has often depended more directly upon conditions in France, Russia, and India than it has on their own enterprise or lack of it. Such facts serve to emphasize their role as *victims*. But it is also essential to understand how readily American farmers were seduced from "farming as a way of life" for the greater prizes of specialization, commerce, and speculation.

The literature on these subjects is voluminous. Among the journal articles, the following stand out: C. F. Emerick, "An Analysis of Agricultural Discontent in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly*, XI (Sept. 1896); T. Saloutos, "The Agricultural Problem and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism," *Agricultural History*, XXII (July 1948); P. W. Gates, "The Homestead Law in an Incongruous Land System," *American Historical Review*, XLI (July 1936); Gates, "The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXVI (July 1942); M. Rothstein, "America in the International Rivalry for the British Wheat Market, 1860-1914," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVII (Dec. 1960); F. A. Shannon, "The Status of the Midwestern Farmer in 1900," *Ibid.*, XXXVII (Dec. 1950). Mildred Throne's "Southern Iowa Agriculture, 1833-1890: The Progress from Subsistence to Commercial Corn-Belt Farming," *Agricultural History*, XXIII (April 1949) is a case study that demonstrates, among other things, how very soon after settlement farming usually departed from the ideal of independence or self-sufficiency.

This article is abridged.

Old Ideals Versus New Ideas in Farm Life

PAUL H. JOHNSTONE

In the century and a half since the United States became a nation, our agriculture has moved all the way from the sickle to the combine, from the wooden plow drawn by a yoke of oxen to the gang plow powered by a tractor. Our population has grown during this period from 4,000,000 to about 130,000,000; and whereas about 9 out of every 10 persons lived on the farm in the days of the Revolution, today only 1 person in 4 is a farmer. Farm life and work were concerned with more than agriculture then, for the farm family supplied itself with goods provided nowadays by special industries. The family took not only food and fuel, but lumber from the land; it boiled its own sugar, made its own soap, grew its own wool, and wore its own homespun. There were then no large factories nor great financial accumulations; there were no urban and industrial masses to be fed by commercial agriculture. But in 1928 over \$63,000,000,000 worth of gross assets were owned by 150 huge corporations; and in 1930 nearly 70,000,000 Americans living in towns and cities of 2,500 or larger, and many more millions in smaller towns, were dependent on the farmer for their food and clothing. A century and a half ago a rich continent of unexploited cheap land awaited the agricultural settler; today there is not enough land to go around.

The economic and technological conditions of American agriculture have in the course of a century or more been altered out of all recognition by thousands of innovations of a drastic and even revolutionary character. These changes have not taken place in a vacuum. Neither farm life, nor any other kind of life, can be divided up. It comes all in one piece and hangs together. The changes that have come to agriculture have not altered just single phases of farm life, leaving everything else untouched. On the contrary, they have profoundly influenced the very essence and character of rural living. Even philosophies and ideas of right and wrong have in some cases taken on a new shape and character. It is the purpose of this article to suggest how the philosophy and social substance of farm life in the United States have altered in response to the tremendous changes that have taken place during the last century in the physical and economic worlds in which we live.

THE SEED OF A NEW GROWTH

. . . The United States, at the very outset, developed special institutions directed in one or another way to the service and betterment of agriculture — first agricultural societies of an aristocratic nature, then agricultural societies and fair associations on a more popular level, then agricultural journalism. State boards and departments of agriculture, national agricultural organizations, a Federal Department of Agriculture, and a Nation-wide system of State agricultural colleges and experiment stations were to follow. In the present day, when such things are taken for granted, their significance is likely to be overlooked. They were in fact, however, something new under the sun. Agriculture had from the earliest times grown like Topsy. It was wholly traditionalized, conducted automatically according to customs transmitted down the centuries without change or question from father to son. Until the age in which the United States became a nation there had been very little rational and systematic effort to improve agricultural practices. . . . The idea that agriculture might be improved simply did not exist in any effective way. . . .

The existence of a growing body of institutions deliberately and directly devoted to the alteration and improvement of agriculture is therefore a fact of tremendous significance in American history. It has meant that there has been within the agricultural world itself a force constantly working to overcome traditional inertias and to direct agriculture into new paths. A stout core of customary resistance has of course remained, but the unrelenting agitation for progress has resulted in an accelerated change that is unprecedented in all previous agricultural history. The story of American agriculture during the last century and of the changes that have taken place in it in that time is to a very large extent the story of the interaction between agricultural leadership on the one hand, striving for improvements and innovations, and the inertias of folkways and informal tradition on the other hand, naturally and inevitably resistant to novelty.

AGRARIANISM

The Tradition

The early leadership of agriculture in America planted the seed of an intellectual tradition that in essence had two parts. The first of these was the idea of progress and scientific improvement. The second was the literary agrarianism derived originally from classic antiquity. Typical of the eighteenth cen-

tury, these ideas were an integral part of the rising new spirit of that age, in the world at large as well as in the world of farms and farmers.

The agrarianism of classic tradition became the political and social agrarianism of Jefferson:

Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which He keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who, not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition . . . generally speaking, the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any State to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption.¹

Such ideas were in close harmony with the romantic intellectual currents of the day because both were based upon assumptions of the goodness of nature, of natural man, and of simplicity of manners. And they amounted also to a philosophical elaboration of a deep but less articulate distrust of the city widely held among the masses of country people. Regardless of political party, Jeffersonian agrarianism came to be accepted as the expression of the rural social creed.

A cardinal point of the agrarian creed was the concept of the complete economic independence of the farmer. In the days when production on the farm was directed principally to the supply of home consumption needs — when all the food except occasional luxury items, when all the power and housing and fuel and most of the clothing for the farm family were produced upon the farm — the doctrine of rural independence harmonized with reality. It was the doctrine of agricultural leadership, regularly repeated by all rural spokesmen. A typical statement is this excerpt from the *Union Agriculturist and Western Prairie Farmer* of August 1841:

The farmer is the most noble and independent man in society. He has ever been honored and respected from the days of Cincinnatus, the Roman farmer, to the present time . . . He is not placed in that station which requires him ever to be seeking or courting popular favor, bowing and bowing to this or that man to gain their favor; but he looks

¹ United States Bureau of Agricultural Economics. *Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Agriculture*. (From Jefferson's Notes on Virginia.) 102 pp. 1937. [Processed.] See p. 48.

upon the earth and the indulgent smiles of Heaven to crown his efforts, resting with the fullest assurance that "seed time and harvest" shall ever continue through all coming time.(3).

The second important point of the agrarian creed — agricultural fundamentalism, it has been called — was the idea that agriculture is the fundamental employment of man upon which all other economic activities were vitally dependent. This was literary doctrine, but it was also popular belief — was bound to be, perhaps, in a country where three-fourths to nine-tenths of the population lived on farms. And thus farm people generally, and most nonfarm people also, firmly believed that, as General H. K. Oliver declared in 1858 —

. . . the whole pulse of commercial and monetary operations is affected by the healthful and unhealthful beatings of the agricultural heart; that stocks and prices in the market and on "change," rise and fall as the agricultural tide ebbs and flows; that, as come the crops, either plenteous or meagre, so darts or limps the gigantic business of the busy world . . .(65).

The third and most important point of the agrarian creed was the idea that agricultural life is the natural life, and, being natural, is therefore good. The ever-present corollary was that city life and urban culture are inevitably enervating and corrupt. The first part of this, concerning the inherent goodness of country life, was generally, so far as it was explicit, a literary or intellectual doctrine. The second, concerning the corruption of the city, was popular belief.

Rural-Urban Antagonisms

There is evidence to indicate that much of the praise of rural life expressed in popular literature was a defensive gesture against real or imagined slurs. Farm journals in those early days were constantly preoccupied with derogatory urban opinions of farm people and rural manners. Farm people were constantly advised by their leaders to be proud of themselves and of their occupation. From this repeated advice it is easy to infer a significant hypersensitiveness, for although it was regularly pointed out that urbanity of manners was superficial at best, and even an indication of shallowness of spirit, frequent exhortation was made to acquire the learning and social grace that would leave no room for such criticism. "There has . . . a certain class of individuals grown up in our land," complained the *Cultivator* in 1835, quoting the Genesee farmer, "who treat the cultivators of the soil as an inferior caste . . . whose utmost abilities are confined to the merit of being able to discuss a boiled potatoe and a rasher of bacon . . ." (51). And Joseph Brayshaw, in an address in 1841 reported by the *Union Agriculturist*

and Western Prairie Farmer, declared that "it is really mortifying to the well-wisher to his country, to see how anxious many of the cultivators of the soil are to leave this occupation, in order to follow some other, which they think will make them gentlemen. Shame upon that gentility which depends only on dress or occupation!" (43).

Closely associated with this common resentment against a consciousness of urban disdain was a deep dislike of many of the trappings of aristocracy and the corruptions of the city. Country people have always felt some hostility toward urban cultures. From age to age the specific objects of that hostility have varied; but in the early United States, farm people concentrated their dislike of the city upon the wealthy and aristocratic, upon "dandies" and loafers, and upon bankers, "loan sharks," "land sharks," middlemen, monopolists, and other symbols of an unwelcomed capitalism. In its first issue in June 1819, the *Plough Boy* in declaring its purposes heaped scorn upon "*female* as well as *male DANDIES*" and detailed its praise of the "real, unsophisticated American; a virtuous, intelligent, brave, hardy, and generous yeoman, who despises alike the trappings of *royalty* or *aristocracy*." Solon Robinson, writing in the *Cultivator* for May 1838, expressed the typical resentment of farmers against "the butterflies who flutter over them in British broadcloth, consuming the fruits of the sweat of their brows" (67). And in November of the same year the *Cultivator* repeated a common warning to farmers of the dangers in store for them in banks. In the list of "things a farmer should not do" was the following:

A farmer should shun the doors of a bank as he would the approach of the plague or cholera; banks are for traders and men of speculation, and theirs is a business with which farmers have little to do.

Farm journals made a regular feature of the iniquities of speculators, usurers, and middlemen. There was much outright preaching against the perils of credit dealings, and short tales were told to illustrate this moral. "The Unjust Usurer — A Tale of the Prairie," printed in the *Prairie Farmer* in 1860 ended on the following note:

This is no imaginative sketch, but a stern reality. It shows the danger of getting into debt, of the sure ruin that will arise from accumulating interest, and the tender mercies of land-sharks and unjust usurers.

Urban culture was considered bad not only for its possible effect upon country people; it was deemed even more disastrous in its effect upon the poor and the unfortunate within the city itself. It was regularly emphasized that in the city "vice and immorality are held up as examples for the unprovided children of unfortunate families" (50). And when a correspondent of the *Prairie Farmer* ventured in 1849 to praise the "luxuries," the "polished

society," and the "investments" possible in the city, he was strongly rebuked for failing to see that city life "*crushes, enslaves, and ruins so many thousands of our young men, who are insensibly made the victims of dissipation, of reckless speculation, and of ultimate crime*" (8).

There was a long historical background for this rural-urban antagonism. It had been especially strong during the colonial period, except in New England. In the middle and southern colonies, the cities were settled and to a large extent governed by the representatives of European commercial houses, sent here to milk the hinterland, and by representatives of European landholders and aristocrats. The upper stratum of the colonial city population, therefore, was identified with European merchants and aristocrats rather than with the American rural settlers whom it exploited.

The farmers and the laboring classes, on the other hand, were for the most part of yeoman and peasant stock and felt akin both because of common origins and common dislike of aristocracy. They had come from a Europe where class lines were relatively rigid to a land of opportunity where they could acquire property and move up the economic ladder. But in many cases they found obstacles in the way of moving up the political and social ladders. The transplanted aristocrats, who came over as members of the ruling class, were slow to recognize the changed situation, even slower to find it desirable. Farmers tended therefore to become progressives and rebels in order to reinforce the economic opportunity of the New World with social and political opportunity as well. Out of long resentment against aristocracy and privilege, the basic belief was developed and perpetuated that virtue is the characteristic of the poor and humble. This good agrarian doctrine linked the struggling farmer with the urban laborer. But it was inconsistent with prevailing Calvinistic doctrine, which said by implication that virtue was rewarded by material blessings, and tended to link the successful farmer with the successful city dweller.

Regional Differences in Rural-Urban Relationships

In New England the proportion and importance of representatives of European aristocracy and commercial interests was very much less than in the Crown Colonies farther south, at least until Massachusetts lost her charter. Furthermore, the population distributed itself in townships, where the people lived in the town and went into the fields to farm. The community of interests within the town cut across occupational lines. There was much part-time farming and part-time manufacturing or business. Since many people were therefore part of both the rural and the urban occupational groups at the same time, the whole pattern tended to minimize both the differences and the antagonisms between those who earned a living by farming

and those who earned one by trading or manufacturing. This township plan of living based on community of interests and the political democracy that developed through it fostered a sense of equality that was relatively little disturbed by class antagonisms.

In the middle Colonies, which were largely settled by the parceling out of large estates, the township plan never developed, and the county, an unwieldy social unit in those days of slow transportation, became the political unit. It was in these Colonies that the isolated farmstead which was to be the pattern on western homestead lands was first found. With isolated farmsteads rural-urban antagonism increased, because a sharp division of functions between the city and the country developed. The city seemed to exist as a parasite on the country.

In the South, where the plantation system developed side by side but in successful competition with the yeoman's subsistence homestead, the only function served by the city was as a marketing and transshipping point for the cash crops of the plantations. The city seemed only the agent of remote and somewhat parasitic commercial interests with whom the planters were often at odds. Agrarian liberalism was in the air, and the great plantation owners snatched it up as a rationalization of their own position. Thus, because it was somehow easy for the proprietors of vast estates to believe the praise of humble yeomen applied to themselves, the anomaly of a liberal gentry developed.

The Democratic Character of American Agrarianism

The United States has never had a peasant agriculture, and farm people in this country have never had the sense of inferiority and awkward rusticity of a European peasantry. There was, undoubtedly, a certain crudity of manners that the inevitable rawness and privation of the frontier engendered. And there is, indeed, much evidence that rural people were aware of the cultural inadequacies and the lack of refinement so frequent in their very young civilization and that they resented snobbish criticisms from the city and the seaboard. But that resentment did not spring from any feeling of innate inferiority. Rather, there developed among the small freehold farmers along the frontier a spirit of lusty democracy and social equality. Aristocracies of birth and wealth were left behind in the East. Along the line of westward expansion especially, everyone was close to both poverty and wealth. Wages were generally high in proportion to the cost of becoming a proprietor. Class lines did not exist, hardships were routine, and every man's hands were calloused. The resentments of these frontier agricultural people were directed principally against the lily fingers of the idle, the posturing of aristocrats, and the devious devices of those who lived by manipulation rather than by

creative labor. For themselves they knew that toil was preparation for security, and crudity the prelude to refinement. Probably no people ever built so many schools and churches on such a slender margin above the necessities of existence. Homespun was still a sign of virtue, but this did not mean that some day they would not wear silk.

There was a great deal of shifting back and forth between farming and town trades. The carpenter and the blacksmith probably had been farmers and might well become farmers again; the farmer down the road had perhaps worked for a while as a bootmaker. The traditional household practice of crafts that advancing technology was just then beginning to displace by factory industry made this possible. Few people, therefore, were ever far removed either from farming or from commerce and industry.

As settlement moved farther west into prairie lands, subsistence practices became difficult and even impossible, and farmers were forced into commercial production, with increasing dependency upon distant markets, intermediate middlemen, and transportation facilities. There was ordinarily very little local industry with which the agriculture and the farm people of a community could be economically linked and socially bound. The farmers of these regions therefore tended to identify themselves according to a vocational and economic grouping rather than by neighborhood or social classification.

Another factor that influenced the growth of attitudes and institutions in the agricultural West, where the predominant rural culture of this age was developed, was the fact that a large proportion of its pioneers and settlers were the disinherited of the older East. The rebellious suspicion felt by so many toward the East from which they had fled helped to direct hostility toward wealth and aristocracy and ease and polish, all of which long remained as symbols of the East.

THE VIRTUE OF LABOR

The famous French observer of American life, Alexis de Tocqueville, was impressed 15 years later by the fact that labor was so highly esteemed as an economic necessity that it became a social necessity and a moral virtue. There is nothing about this that seems very notable to us today, for it is a part of common American belief. But it looked new and strange to Europeans who were used to the aristocratic tradition that work is degrading.

Among a democratic people, where there is no hereditary wealth, every man works to earn a living, or has worked, or is born of parents who have worked. The notion of labour is therefore presented to the mind on every side as the necessary, natural, and honest condition of human

existence. Not only is labour not dishonourable among such a people, but it is held in honour: the prejudice is not against it, but in its favour. In the United States a wealthy man thinks that he owes it to public opinion to devote his leisure to some kind of industrial or commercial pursuit, or to public business. He would think himself in bad repute if he employed his life solely in living (70, p. 162).

Industry and thrift were considered cardinal virtues to a degree that was perhaps unprecedented in many previous centuries of Occidental history. There was no aristocracy on the frontier to establish ease as a social distinction, and hard, grubbing toil was generally necessary for even the barest maintenance of life.

Gain without toil was considered unnatural, and reverence for labor was heightened by religious sanction taken from the Bible. Thus the Cultivator reminded its patrons in 1836 that "the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden, *to dress it and keep it*; and He further told him, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, and thou shalt *till the ground* from whence thou art taken'" (2). The concept of the necessity and the honor of labor penetrated ideas of rearing the young, in whom the habits of industry should be inculcated from an early age. "There is no greater defect in educating children," declared the Farmer's Monthly Visitor in 1846, "than neglecting to accustom them to work. It is an evil that attaches mostly to large towns and cities" (6). Much of the literary effort of that day celebrated the honor and profit of labor. . . .

Work Was Work in Town and Country Alike

Wherever the small freehold pattern prevailed, rural people tended strongly to identify themselves with all labor, whether strictly agricultural or not. The word "labor" referred to all creative work with the hands, and "laborer," though sometimes used specially to distinguish the unskilled worker from the "mechanic," was ordinarily understood to include the farmer. . . .

There is much significance in the fact that the agitation for agricultural education that developed during the 1830's included mechanical or industrial education as a matter of course. The desired establishments were frequently referred to by farmer spokesmen as "manual labor schools," to provide "industrial education"; and they were urged as a benefit to "the laboring classes," or in the interest of developing "educated labor." The frequent present-day combination of engineering and agricultural colleges is a historical vestige of this once prevailing community of interest between farmers and urban workers. . . .

There was frequently an exultant optimism in the expressions of the nobility and accomplishments of labor. Those who with their own hands

carved farms from the forest and with their own eyes saw the wilderness transformed into a peaceful and productive countryside, with roads and railroads and schools and flourishing towns, could appreciate labor's accomplishments and also believe in unending improvement and progress. The eighteenth-century doctrine of progress had taken root and flourished in America as in no other country in the world. The unequalled opportunity that America offered, the rapid expansion and growth, and the rise in material living standards were so evident that what had been a new and startling idea in early eighteenth-century Europe appeared in nineteenth-century America to be an eternal truth. . . .

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

The idea of progress was a basic element in the creed of early America, both rural and urban. It was not merely an opinion reached by calm deliberation. It had begun, indeed, as an intellectual doctrine but soon became an unreasoned basic attitude, an assumption that the very law of nature itself compelled man and society to go on improving indefinitely. . . .

The doctrine of technological progress, from being merely the idea of a few intellectuals, rapidly became a widely accepted popular assumption. The extent to which this was true is illustrated by an incident related by de Tocqueville:

It can hardly be believed how many facts naturally flow from the philosophical theory of the indefinite perfectibility of man, or how strong an influence it exercises even on men who, living entirely for the purposes of action and not of thought, seem to conform their actions to it, without knowing anything about it.

I accost an American sailor, and I inquire why the ships of his country are built so as to last but for a short time; he answers without hesitation that the art of navigation is every day making such rapid progress, that the finest vessel would become almost useless if it lasted beyond a certain number of years. In these words, which fell accidentally and on a particular subject from a man of rude attainments, I recognize the general and systematic idea upon which a great people directs all its concerns (70, *p.* 34).

The United States thus accepted broadly and popularly, at an early period, the idea of indefinite technological progress. In that youthful age, the United States was in fact unusually disposed to accord at least some welcome to almost any innovation, because she was herself an innovation inclined lustily to impatience with methods and traditions that had only age and custom to recommend them. It seems probable that the readiness to accept technological novelties developed more rapidly among some urban, in-

dustrial, and commercial groups than in the more remote rural areas. But the ever-present reform element of agricultural leadership was not surpassed by any in its zeal for progress and kept up a ceaseless and impatient agitation for improvement, regularly insisting that —

The characteristic of the present day is *reformation* and general improvement in the agricultural department — in the sciences and arts — by general diffusion of agricultural and scientific knowledge and by “*elevation and refinement of intellect*” (31).

* * *

RESISTANCE TO “BOOK FARMING”

Although labor-saving mechanical devices were generally welcomed and adopted relatively fast, nonmechanical technology encountered stubborn resistance. Agricultural science a century ago had in fact very little to offer aside from new machines, unless it was enthusiasm and faith, and for a long time labored under the disadvantage of the contemptuous label, “book farming.” In the year the *Cultivator* was founded (1834), its editors received the following counsel from an early subscriber:

I think in the *Cultivator* you ought to dwell continually on the importance of science to agriculture; I mean of all the applicable science the world has got. . . . We want to see the application of geological and chemical science to the different processes in agriculture (1).

That they needed the advice is questionable; that they followed it is certain. Book farming was advocated steadily by every agricultural journal of the day. But only a few farmers — generally the more prosperous ones — were ready to risk following the practices advocated in the name of science by agricultural societies and farm journals. For this fervent few, however, science held an appeal that was more than the lure of profit alone. . . .

BELIEF IN THE TRIUMPH OF THE GOOD

Logically essential to the doctrine of progress and to the prevalent ideas of the goodness of nature was the moral optimism of the age. This moral optimism amounted to a belief that the universe is morally ordered and that for that reason good is inherently stronger than evil and will therefore inevitably triumph. This faith had theological, philosophical, and literary foundations of great dignity and prestige. Like the idea of progress and the romantic attitudes toward nature, it developed with the intellectual element; also like them its essence was popularized during the nineteenth century. The phenomenal increase of literacy in that period accelerated to an unprecedented degree the rapidity with which intellectual traditions were

transferred to the masses. Metaphysical speculation and aesthetic elaboration were distilled into the earthy slogans of the people. "Behind every cloud there's a silver lining," "Right is bound to win out in the end," "Children (or dogs) are good judges of human nature," and "A true lover of nature (or of children, or of animals, or of music, or of good books) can't be an evil man" were popular applications of the intellectualized moral optimism of Berkeley, Rousseau, and Wordsworth.

RISING LAND VALUES AND BOOMER PSYCHOLOGY

But certain folk beliefs logically similar to intellectualized ideas seem to have developed independently. Perhaps the reason for this was that widely prevailing characteristics of the age in which they evolved determined the general nature of both. A case in point is that of boomer psychology — one of the most important of all the influences that have shaped the course of American agricultural development — which very obviously grew up out of the peculiar set of circumstances in which millions of Americans lived their everyday lives. Boomer psychology, although in a logical sense merely an extension of the idea of progress, was much less the product of any intellectual vogue than of the everyday experience of a people feverishly colonizing a rich and unexploited continent in an age of unprecedented world-wide commercial expansion. . . .

From the earliest days of frontier expansion, sensational rises in land value were the repeated experience of pioneer farmers. Villages sprang up overnight and rapidly became thriving towns. Population grew, roads came in, river traffic opened up. Settlement, commercial development, and speculation increased land prices, sometimes phenomenally. Out of the experience of witnessing and being part of this expansion, the idea developed that land prices would always rise, population always increase, towns always grow larger. Farming in new regions therefore more often than not assumed a speculative nature founded upon a universal confidence in rising land values. Morris Birkbeck in 1817 described this phenomenon as follows:

The merchant invests his profits, and the professional man his savings, in the purchase of uncultivated lands. The farmer, instead of completing the improvement of his present possessions, lays out all he can save in entering more land. In a district which is settling, this speculation is said to pay on the average, when managed with judgment, fifteen percent. Who then will submit to the toils of agriculture, further than bare necessity requires, for fifteen percent? Or who would loan his money, even at fifteen percent, when he can obtain that interest by investing it in land? (39, p. 85).

De Tocqueville was among those who first noted the character that was given to American agriculture and rural life by the speculative and commercial optimism that pervaded the land. Coming from a country where land descended from father to son for generations and even centuries, he was in a position to be impressed by the impermanence that resulted from the boomer psychology and commercial enthusiasm that in agriculture was peculiar to America. His observations obviously did not apply to some parts of New England or to much of the older South where a landed aristocracy had taken root in the soil, but they were pertinent to most of the newer country.

It seldom happens that an American farmer settles for good upon the land which he occupies: especially in the districts of the far west he brings land into tillage in order to sell it again, and not to farm it: he builds a farmhouse on the speculation, that, as the state of the country will soon be changed by the increase of population, a good price will be gotten for it (70, *p.* 168).

In some of the older regions, there was a pronounced rise in land values during the eighteenth century (38, *p.* 70). In the ante bellum South, land values were seldom consistently high, and in general rose and fell with business cycles; but settlement of new areas was there as everywhere accompanied by pronounced increases in land valuation (55, *p.* 642ff.). Benjamin Horace Hibbard's *History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin* indicates that in many cases there the price of land tripled or quadrupled between 1845 and 1855, and doubled again in the next 10-year period (59, *p.* 195 *et passim*). In Iowa the average value of an acre of improved land increased from \$6.09 in 1850, to \$11.91 in 1860, to \$20.21 in 1870; thence it rose more slowly, to \$43.31 in 1900, before booming to \$96 in 1910, \$134 in 1915, and \$255 in 1920 (56, *p.* 4). Land booms were frequently promoted by large owners of land and land speculators from the earliest times, and by canal and railroad interests later. . . .

In the course of time it became the prevailing fashion to be "a booster, not a knocker." Such wide, unquestioning adherence was developed for the assumptions that unlimited growth and expansion and increased prosperity were the natural disposition of things that to suggest even mildly that such might not forever be the case meant in most communities to be branded as a dangerous eccentric. This extraordinary optimism was probably necessary to the great rapidity with which the second half of the continent was settled, civilized, and tied together. But it gave to American agriculture a speculative and impermanent character that was to be the cause of many later evils. It contributed heavily to an increase in farm capitalization and debt load that

could not be justified or liquidated unless the anticipated growth and expansion continued indefinitely — which turned out not to be the case.

The moral aspects of our agricultural traditions, deriving as they did from times of greater stability, implied an ideal of a permanent agriculture neither speculative nor highly commercialized. The little farm, well-tilled, highly sufficient unto itself, with no binding ties to the town and market place and untouched by the vagaries and passions of the changing world, was the assumption upon which the qualities of security, serenity, and independence were imputed to the agricultural life. This moral tradition, perpetuated in its idealized form principally by agricultural journals and writers and other farm leaders, has served by its persistence to develop a conflict in agricultural ideas because of its inconsistency with the speculative and commercial tendencies that were growing up in modern American agriculture.

THE VOGUE OF SELF-EDUCATION

The doctrine of progress meant more than confidence in technological progress alone; it meant, just as vitally, a faith in human perfectibility. Although many Americans were the disinherited of older lands, once in America they were not submissive; although they resented the trappings of wealth, the symbols of ease, and the pedantry of a learning they did not possess, they were not willing meekly to accept inferior status. They would not accept what they did not have as symbols of superiority, but they aspired to those things no less.

A significant proportion of farm people shared enthusiastically in the vogue of self-education and self-improvement that prevailed widely a century ago. This popular passion for self-education originated in New England, if it can be said to have had any geographical point of origin. . . .

Growth of Farmers' Clubs

In the course of time, reading and study for cultural ends — for the enrichment of life — was more and more urged for groups rather than for lone individuals. Lone study by candlelight was still suggested for those whose aim was to get ahead in the world. But for general intellectual improvement it was advised that families spend their evenings reading and discussing good books, or that they form neighborhood clubs for that purpose. During the Civil War, and especially in the years immediately following, neighborhood farmers' clubs sprang up in great numbers. The common purposes were to overcome the isolation which was, significantly, for the first time being widely regarded as a social handicap, and to cultivate the intellectual interests and capacities of rural people. Both the motives and the methods of

these farmers' clubs are evident in an article describing how to organize and conduct them that was printed in both the *Country Gentleman* and the *New England Farmer* in 1871:

The long evenings are now at hand, and the farmer, finding a little leisure after the labors of the day, looks about him for some means of pleasure and amusement wherewith to occupy the time. He will find no more profitable way to spend an occasional evening than in the meetings of a wide-awake Farmers' Club. . . . Here he can in a measure obtain that Mental Culture which is so much neglected by those who labor day after day upon their farms.

. . . Mind needs contact with mind to rub it into activity . . . These Farmers' Clubs then, are just what is needed to draw the farmers together, and to give them an opportunity to bring their minds in contact . . .

It is more than mere coincidence that the growth of community farmers' clubs came in the same period with the first rapid development of the Patrons of Husbandry. The Granger movement grew out of the same common desires and aspirations and ministered to the same needs, and in many instances the formation of a local farmers' club turned out to be a preliminary to the establishment of a Grange affiliated with the national organization. Thus the impulse to enrich rural life proceeded according to the familiar sequence of individual effort first, then local group action, and finally national organization.

The vogue of self-education should not be confused with the contemporary craze for refinement. Once the worst hardships of pioneer life were overcome, or as soon as progress permitted some leisure, small-town people and many of the more prosperous farmers sought to cultivate refinement in manners and gracious accomplishments. . . . But among most farm people . . . the common opinion was that: "The piano and lace frame are good in their places; and so are ribbons, frills, and tinsel, but you cannot make a dinner of the former, nor a bed blanket of the latter." . . .

THE DRIVE TO DEMOCRATIZE EDUCATION

The genuine vogue of self-education and self-improvement among farmers and working people was in a sense only an incident of their long campaign for enhanced educational opportunity. . . . For more than a generation, until the passage of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862, education was the most constant and prominent political cause advocated by farmers and their leaders.

The Lyceum movement was the first phase of the organized drive for education for farmers and working-class people. In the 1820's, agricultural spokes-

men confined themselves generally to demands for State financial aid to agricultural societies and fair associations, which were in their way devoted to the dissemination of information concerning better farming methods. . . . In general, the popular demand for a broadening of educational opportunities by the establishment of public schools grew out of the democratic ideals of the people and constituted a protest against the aristocratic practices and purposes that characterized most of the private schools of that day. . . . The inadequacy of State financing led to Federal support through the Morrill Act of 1862. The extent to which the drive for agricultural and mechanical education was the common purpose of both farmers and urban working people, as well as the degree to which it was a reaction against the aristocratic temper of the prevailing forms of higher education, is indicated by the words of Jonathan Turner, of Illinois:

The industrial class need a . . . system of *liberal education* for their own class, and adapted to their own pursuits; to create for them an *Industrial Literature*, adapted to their professional wants, to raise up for them *teachers* and *lecturers*, for subordinate institutes, and to elevate them, their pursuits, and their posterity to that relative position in human society for which God designed them (61, p. 69).

It is easily observable that by the time the agitation for formal agricultural education had grown to effective proportions it had acquired a strong tendency to emphasize practical ends and aims. Intellectual improvement for its own sake declined in importance, and the idea of training for vocational and professional efficiency gained in proportion.

Education as a Means of Personal Advancement

Many forces joined from the very outset to alter slowly yet fundamentally the ideals and motives of education and self-improvement. The ideal of intellectual cultivation for its own sake began to give way to utilitarian motives almost before it was fully established. It did not, of course, completely disappear; it is present even today. Yet the very urgency of describing attractively the benefits of self-education led to claims that personal advancement up the social and economic ladder was the purpose of education.

The regularly repeated argument of advocates of education and self-improvement was that great men were once poor boys who by hard work and discipline had made themselves great. And there was repeated appeal to the established and very real idea of opportunity. Optimism, respect for industry and accomplishment, and hunger for wide esteem for the class of hard-working common men reshaped educational desires into aspiration for mundane success. . . .

Implicit in the repeated opportunity stories of poor boys who rose to greatness was the moral that the object of self-improvement was advance in rank. And in general the earthy practicality of the people tended in the long run to give emphasis to ideals that fitted the real desires of everyday life. Psychologically, there is no reason to assume that any contradiction necessarily exists between such variant motives of self-education. And historically it is a fact that they not only could but did live side by side. But what began as a vogue of self-improvement almost entirely for the sake of cultural enrichment of life rapidly became a vogue of self-improvement in order to advance in station. The former never died out, but the latter in the course of time became predominant and contributed to, as well as shared in, the success motif that has colored so much American thought and American life.

The individualistic and success philosophy that motivated much of the agitation for formal education and self-education was revealed in the answer of the Prairie Farmer to a Canadian query regarding the proud and intelligent way in which Americans articulated their opinions.

The secret is to be found in our Common Schools, Lyceums, and the modes of conducting political canvasses. It is the natural and necessary result, of the doctrine "every man for himself" — that is, his *elevation* or depression, socially or politically, depends entirely upon his own exertions (36, p. 100).

Considerable significance is to be attached to the identity and accomplishments of the men who were judged to be great and who were held up as examples to the young. In the period before the Civil War, writers, philosophers, scientists, inventors, and political and military figures predominated among those named as illustrious. Among those most frequently named were Benjamin Franklin, Jeremy Bentham, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Linnaeus, George Washington, Robert Burns, and William Cobbett. There was a wide and varying assortment of contemporary governors, senators, and scientists and inventors who had been born poor but through extraordinary effort had made themselves famous and great. Almost never, during this early period, was a financier, industrialist, or businessman so mentioned; but there was a growing tendency to think of attainment in terms of commercial criteria, and this was, in the course of time, to alter the specific ideals of success. It is to be noted that farming was never cited as the vocation of great and illustrious men; models of success were invariably others than farmers. This is significant because farm youth were urged simultaneously to prepare for success and yet to stay on the farm and ignore the false lure and illusory rewards of the city.

Farm youth was already beginning to crowd to the growing towns and cities, thereby arousing the protest that cityward migration has immemo-

rially excited. But among the masses of older rural people, the greatest opportunity was still believed to exist in farming, partly because of eternally expected rises in land values and prices generally, and partly because of the abundance of cheap lands and the financial ease with which one could become a free-holding farmer.

* * *

FORCES OF CHANGE: COMMERCIALIZATION, URBANIZATION,
AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE

The principal alterations in the pattern of agricultural life that have come during the past century may be summarized under the titles of commercialization, urbanization, and technological advance. The forces underlying these changes were present, and in varying degrees operative, a hundred years or more ago; but their total effect upon the everyday life of rural people was by no means then what it later became. . . .

The most profound differences between rural life today and a century ago do not in any case consist intrinsically in an increased commercialization, or in a more advanced technology, or in a wider adoption of material things from the city. Many farms then sold as high a proportion of their products as do many commercial farms today. There were farms then that had as much labor-saving equipment as do many farms in this more modern mechanical age. The most profound changes in farm life — those that have had the greatest effect upon the destinies, the course of daily life, and the happiness or unhappiness of farm people — have not been the changes in material things themselves but those involved in the gradual alteration of habits, customs, institutions, and ideas that has constituted the social or cultural adaptation to material change. . . .

NEW ECONOMIC DEMANDS UPON AGRICULTURE

The extension of industrial technology, the growth of urban markets, the increase of transportation facilities, the general rise in the standard of living — all these and related things have exerted tremendous pressure upon the farmer to become a cog in a vast and infinitely complex economic machine. Urban industry has removed from the farm one by one the industrial functions that once were performed there. The farmer who once wore homespun from his own sheep now wears denim from Oshkosh and cotton shirts from Troy. Soap making is gone; and not one of a thousand farmers who grow wheat eats his own grain. Few farmers build their own houses; and their houses are not lighted with home-made candles or tallow wicks but with kerosene or electricity. Ordinarily they do not sell or barter a variety of prod-

use for the use of nearby townfolk; their customers are 100 or 1,000 or 3,000 miles away.

Commercialization and specialization have been the necessary complements in agriculture to the factory system and mass production in industry. In the space of 60 years, between 1869 and 1929, the annual total of manufactured products turned out by American industries grew in value from about $3\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars to about 70 billions. During this same period, the number of those gainfully employed in agriculture increased slowly from about $6\frac{1}{2}$ to $10\frac{1}{4}$ millions, while nonagricultural employment quadrupled — from 12 to 48 millions. Vast urban accumulations grew up. In 1870 only a fifth of our people lived in places of 8,000 or more population; but in 1930 roughly half — over 60 millions — were residents of such places. And only a quarter of our people are now on the farm. All this has meant that agriculture must be commercialized, for in no other way could the urban and industrial masses be fed and clothed. It has also involved specialization, to which heavy advantages frequently accrue in production for the market. The rising standard of urban living has had the same commercializing effect as the growth of urban population. The growing demand for fresh fruits and vegetables in winter and the increasing substitution of delicacies for breadstuffs and heavier foods have tended to place a premium upon highly specialized production for special urban markets.

American agriculture was called upon, moreover, to supply a European market as well as a growing domestic demand. In the Civil War period and after, this Nation was still very young financially and industrially. There were few American manufactures with which to pay for the European goods sold in this country. It was largely American agriculture that paid this bill by vast exports of food and fiber for the crowded industrial peoples of Europe.

In the fiscal year 1850-51 total agricultural exports amounted to \$146,717,000; from this they climbed gradually to a record figure of \$260,280,000 in 1859-60. Cotton was then the single item accounting for most of the total. But after the Civil War, when farm products sold abroad came more and more to include a large quantity of breadstuffs, meats, and fruits, agricultural exports climbed to \$296,962,000 in 1869-70, to \$694,315,000 in 1879-80, fell back to \$634,856,000 in 1889-90, and climbed again to \$844,617,000 in 1899-1900. The slight rise to \$869,244,000 in 1909-10 was merely a prelude to the tremendous World War expansion that skyrocketed the figure to \$3,849,663,000 in 1919-20. During the 1920's, our agricultural exports regularly totaled between \$1,500,000,000 and somewhat over \$2,000,000,000.

The effect of the growth suggested by these figures was to increase vastly

the involvement of American agriculture in a commercialized, specialized, interdependent world economy. American grain and meat production in the latter half of the nineteenth century became a cog in the international economic machine, just as tobacco production had become in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and cotton production in the early nineteenth. Thus the dominant American crops — tobacco and cotton, corn, pork, and wheat — became the special products of an agricultural plant geared to the needs of an international and interdependent economy of regional and national specialization.

Without this vast expansion of urban and industrial markets for farm products in both America and Europe the agricultural settlement of our grain-producing areas could neither have proceeded with the same speed nor have developed the same kind of farm economy. It would have had to depend on very limited local markets and would have been forced into diversification rather than specialization, subsistence practices rather than commercial dependency. Thus there has been an irresistible impulse toward specialization and commercialization in American agriculture that was generated by forces as remote and impersonal as population trends, the rising standard of living, and changes in the national economy not only of this but of other countries. Involuntarily, and by dint of circumstances, the farmer has lost much of his old-time independence and has found himself tied to the market, to industry, and to the city.

Self-Sufficiency Gives Way to Interdependence

. . . It was upon . . . self-sufficiency that the traditional independence of the farm family was based. Equipped by habit and skill to supply its own needs for food, shelter, and clothing, the farm family could if necessary face away from the world and live completely and even happily upon the products of its own making. But in proportion as industries were transferred from the farm and home into the shop or factory and as rural people began to acquire new tastes for urban products and luxuries their independence was lost. . . . Between 1810 and 1840 industry was rapidly removed from the home to the factory. In this period, except in the most remote frontiers, farm families largely ceased to manufacture their own textiles and clothing. Grist-mills, flour mills, and sawmills became common and grew larger as they served increasingly wide areas.

In addition to the loss of home industry, which necessitated cash outlay for products previously supplied right on the farm, new needs were developed. In the Civil War period the sewing machine, based on Howe's patent of 1846 and Singer's patent of 1851, was coming into common use on the finer textiles that were issuing in increasing quantities from the looms of

manufacturing towns. At about the same time kerosene began to be used widely for better lighting, and this too increased the need for cash outlay. There were to come telephones (in 1930, 34 percent of all farms reported telephones), electricity, modern plumbing, automobiles (in 1930, 58 percent of all farmers reported automobiles). Many farm families were destined in the first third of the twentieth century to give up home butchering and baking and buy all their meat from the butcher and all their bread from the grocer or baker. Social prestige came more and more to be attached to the possession of various products that were supplied by industry and could be obtained only by cash outlay. Most of these changes and innovations have resulted in a higher standard of living, but they have also involved the surrender of economic independence.

THE INFLUENCE OF FARM BOOKKEEPING

. . . After the Civil War the drive was intensified to induce farmers to think of their farms as a business and of themselves as businessmen. This meant the keeping of books, counting of costs, and determination of farm procedures on the basis of calculated commercial profits. In this vein the Southern Cultivator and Dixie Farmer preached in 1887:

The time has come when the farmer must be a business man as well as an agriculturist. . . . He will have to keep farm accounts, know how much he spends, what his crops cost him, and how much the profit foots up.

. . . The idea that the farm is an investment on which the farmer should expect to draw interest above and beyond the direct reward for his labor or that the farmer should make a monetary calculation of the value of his labor is an application of principles entirely harmonious with the modern commercial world of the city and industry, but it is a radical departure from the older agrarianism. The emphasis upon a paper concept of ownership, as opposed to a use concept, is obvious; and the remoteness from earlier attitudes which identified the farm as a home providing an opportunity for the production of the necessities of life by the sweat of the brow, where obstacles were natural rather than social, can hardly be exaggerated.

THE FARMER BECOMES A BUSINESSMAN

. . . Thus under the progressive slogan, "How we have all advanced," the Prairie Farmer argued in 1868:

The old rule that a farmer should produce all that he required, and that the surplus represented his gains, is part of the past. Agriculture,

like all other business, is better for its subdivisions, each one growing that which is best suited to his soil, skill, climate, and market, and with its proceeds purchase his other needs (15).

A prominent agricultural educator and leader who for a generation has been one of the most distinguished spokesmen for modern trends in farm management and progress expressed very well the new point of view in an article written for the *Cornell Countryman* in 1904:

. . . Now the object of farming is not primarily to make a living, but it is to make money. To this end it is to be conducted upon the same business basis as any other producing industry. No matter what the yield, it must have been produced at a profit or the farmer is not making money; again, no matter what the profits, the fertility of the land must not be allowed to run down or the capital stock will depreciate and the business will evaporate and come to naught even under conditions of apparent success (48).

By developing along such lines American agriculture increased vastly its cash income. But on the other side of the ledger its cash outgo was also increased. By 1929 American farmers paid out annually nearly a billion dollars for feed, over a quarter billion for fertilizer, nearly a billion for labor, nearly three-quarters of a billion for implements and machinery, and nearly fifty million dollars for electricity and power to power companies, exclusive of home generating outfits.

Much of the changed character of the farmer in this age has come about as the result of a long and persistent effort to identify farming directly with business and the farmer with businessmen. Increasing emphasis was given to the merchandizing aspect of farming. In an article entitled "The Farmer as a Merchant," this typical counsel was given in 1887:

Given farms and farmers of equal productive power, the one who sells best will have the best success. The work of farming is only half done when the crop is made out of the ground; sometimes the biggest half is in making the money out of the crop. This branch of farm business needs cultivating; this (the merchant) side of the farmer needs development. Watch and study the markets, and the ways of the marketmen, and dealers in all kinds of goods, and learn the art of "selling well" (22).

When agricultural colleges began to carry their work to farmers through farmers' weeks, institutes, and so on, they too preached the ideal of the businessman. The *Cornell Countryman* announced in 1903 that the Farmers' Institute, held at the agricultural college there, was "a business meeting for business men . . ." (24).

CHANGED ATTITUDES TOWARD LABOR

One of the most significant phases of the long trend toward the identification of farmers with businessmen has been an almost complete reversal in attitudes toward labor. Whereas a century ago farmers generally identified themselves as of the working class and did not ordinarily distinguish themselves from other groups of workers, they have in the course of time acquired an employer consciousness and have developed a strong inclination to regard those who work for wages as of a different class, with other and even hostile interests.

In the period when farmers identified themselves so closely with urban labor, a significant proportion of that labor was still of the pattern of the independent craftsman who owned his tools and shop and sold his product or his services directly to the consumer. A good deal of the time he came closer to being a small businessman than a wage worker in the modern sense. Independent craftsmen of this sort had much in common with farmers that was lost when they became mere factory wage hands.

During the past century, however, urban workers have been losing both economic independence and social status; and farm people, though losing economic independence, have continued to be proprietors in a world in which proprietors are relatively less common than before. Their living standards in terms of industrial products have been rising, and the social status of the more prosperous class of farmers has been greatly improved. A very real differentiation in economic and social position has thus developed between segments of society that once were united in interests and outlook.

Rural Opposition to Organized Industrial Labor

Farmers appear never to have been in a position to sympathize generally with organized industrial labor. So long as urban workers looked like independent craftsmen, their situation could be regarded sympathetically through symbols familiar to the farmer. Thus when in 1851 a group of New England workmen banded together to start a factory of their own, there was sufficient appeal to the farmer to win enthusiastic approval from the agricultural press under the slogan, "Labor is capital" (11). But by the time trade unions of a modern character began to develop, the farmer was conscious of himself both as an employer and as a commercial proprietor and was already partly converted to the association of virtue with economic status. Therefore, in spite of his continuing antipathy to trusts and great capital accumulations, he was not prepared to look kindly upon the outlandish innovation of militant unions or the violence incidental to strikes.

And labor unions appeared as a companion monster of monopoly, both of which were set to prey upon the farmer. "While labor and capital strive to adjust their differences, the farmer peaceably grows the crops to feed both," was the typical comment of the *Farm Journal* in 1886 (20). At times there was a readiness to believe that capital and labor acted in collusion. Thus the Orange Judd Farmer expressed the opinion in 1903 that:

Labor and capital engaged in the manufacture of window glass have apparently united to prevent any others going into business. By this plan manufacturers expect to absolutely monopolize production and shove up prices at will, and under these circumstances they agree to give their help an increase in wages. . . . The farmer feeds them all, and when he gets tired of being robbed by such combinations, he will strike back.

Much of the trouble came from the fact that higher pay and shorter hour agitation by labor unions sometimes offended the rural mind, which out of its own experience had acquired a deep respect for long hours of hard work for humble rewards. The enforced dependence of the urban wage worker has never been sympathetically comprehensible to the farmer with his traditions of independence and individualism. In considering industrial disputes, country people have tended to look upon work as a moral duty, to regard insistence upon conditions and terms of labor as a partial abrogation of that moral duty, and to project their own moral and nonexploitative outlook into the industrial situation. The milder form of this agrarian attitude is suggested by a statement written 30 years ago by L. H. Bailey, one of the grand old men of American agriculture:

It is doubtful if city industrialism is developing the best type of working-men, considered from the point of view of society. I am glad of all organizations of men and women, whether working-men or not. But it seems to me that the emphasis in some of the organizations has been wrongly placed. It has too often been placed on rights rather than on duties. No person and no people ever developed by mere insistence on their rights. It is responsibility that develops them. The working-man owes responsibility to his employer and to society; and so long as the present organization of society continues he cannot be an effective member of society unless he has the interest of his employer constantly in mind (37, pp. 139-140).

The rural hostility toward labor unions has been so well appreciated by some agents of industrial interests that upon occasion farmer groups and representatives have been easily maneuvered into a front position of opposition to labor causes. An example of this was the case of the agitation for repeal of the Adamson eight-hour law about the time of the National Agri-

cultural Conference in Washington in January 1922. When expenditures for the relief of urban unemployed became an issue in recent years, the cleavage between agricultural and labor interests in the rural mind was emphasized still further. Farm people, still clinging to ideals of thrift and industry, and as their own bosses conscious of the ever-present work to be done on their farms, tended to associate all unemployment with the idleness of laziness and to regard huge relief expenditures as prodigal waste.

The Widening Gap Between Proprietors and Hired Hands

Just as, in the course of a century, a social cleavage has developed separating farm people from urban working people, during the same period there has also been a strong tendency toward stratification within rural society, a widening gap between proprietors of farms and those who do farm work for wages. Until a half century or so ago there had not been in the North and West any widely prevailing class distinctions between operators and hired hands. The individual farm proprietor had as likely as not been a hired hand himself at one time; the rungs of the agricultural ladder were still in place, and the hired man likewise would probably be an owner in the course of time. They were social if not economic equals because what one was, the other had been or would be. Furthermore, the tendency of the freehold farmer to identify himself with the under-dog element of society endured in many applications until the collapse of the agrarian revolt in the Populist defeat of 1896. And as long as this attitude endured, the farmer could not with complete consistency separate himself from those who labored hard and honestly with their hands.

But such attitudes and the customs expressing such attitudes in everyday living were due in the course of time to change profoundly as the farmer became more and more a businessman — yet a businessman working under peculiar disadvantages.

All of the agrarian unrest of the post-Civil War period amounted in sum to a protest against the primary dislocation caused by the impact of the new commercialism and industrialism. The frequent statement that it was the farmer as well as the South that lost the Civil War contains an element of important truth. For the Civil War confirmed the protectionist policies of the industrial Northeast and left the farmer no alternative but to buy in a protected, expensive market while having to sell in a cheap world market. With this initial disadvantage, he was forced increasingly by the march of mechanization and rising land prices into ever higher capital investment; and the increasing desire that spread to every hamlet in the land for more of the new products of industrial specialization placed a multitude of new demands upon him. Both factors increased the need for cash, and owing to

the farmer's economic disadvantage, both resulted in a growing rural debt load. And always the farmer labored under disadvantages that prevented him from receiving a full share either of his own increased production or of the industrial goods that the improved technology of urban industry made possible. Farm living standards rose, but they did not rise in proportion to the farmer's increased efficiency or as rapidly as those of the urban middle class whose tastes and standards were increasingly important as models for rural emulation.

The farmer was becoming a businessman, but he was doing so under a great disadvantage. The main advantages were beginning to accrue to large-scale organization, and the farmer as a lone individual had to pay tribute. Not only did he get low prices for his products, but he frequently paid excessive freight charges to get his stuff to market because others could combine where he could not. Trusts and monopolies of various kinds upon occasion overcharged him exorbitantly. He bought stocks and bonds to secure market transportation that often failed to materialize. And when he sought redress for grievances, he frequently was thwarted by a wall of corporation legalisms.

He became a small, individual businessman just as the economic world began to be dominated by great and corporate businesses. He might have tried to return to the practices and ideals of an earlier agricultural life, but that was impossible. He was already a cog in the modern economic machine and had to turn as the adjacent cogwheel turned him. He himself wanted modern things; he was in debt; and there was no alternative to muddling through.

Because he was in debt, he participated in the Greenback movement, distrusted the "hard-money" men, and yielded to the lure of 16-to-1. Because distribution by middlemen was generally devious and frequently expensive and was always suspect to traditional agrarian ideals of directness and because he had to pay dearly for his credit, he naturally favored crop-credit and storage schemes such as the Sub-Treasury Plan. Because of the prices he had to pay and because he was still a consistent go-it-alone individualist, trusts and monopolies loomed like monsters.

Although he was the under dog in the struggle against great combinations of industry and finance, the farmer had assimilated the ideas and ideals of opportunity and business success to the extent that he found it just as impossible to join forces with impecunious wage labor below as to sympathize with great accumulations of capital above. And thus, after the great Populist disappointment of 1896, he was heartened by the business revival that followed and recovered courage to face forward again on the path of the new commercialism. It should already have been clear that farmers of the domi-

nant group, from having been proud and rebellious under dogs, were destined, after another brief flurry or two of rebelliousness, to become essentially defenders of the state of things as they are, or even of the state of things as they used to be.

This change in attitudes had been helped along by the increasing awareness among farmers of their own commercial proprietary interests, by the decline of economic self-sufficiency within family units, and by the discovery that regionally and by occupation farm proprietors had common commercial interests generally distinct from all others. The increasing acceptance of commercial ideals, the aspiration for higher material living standards, the faith in economic opportunity, the conversion of the self-improvement vogue into the success idea, and the moral optimism that believed virtue is inevitably rewarded, all combined to foster a rebirth of the Calvinistic notion that the Lord reveals His predilections by the bestowal of mundane favors. Thus the way was slowly prepared for a gradual subscription to the idea that right is the companion of wealth and station rather than of humble poverty, that success is a reward of virtue and failure the penalty of vice.

This change did not come quickly, nor has it ever been logically complete. But in many applications, this realignment of the virtues and the vices proceeded rapidly enough to make typical by the eighties the basic sentiments suggested in the following opinions of the *Ohio Practical Farmer* in 1885 (19): "Here are two grand divisions of society — the honorable and useful, and the poor, the vicious and criminal." Log-cabin birth was long considered a desirable attribute of public men — from 1840 on, practically a prerequisite to Presidential aspiration — because it signified sympathy for the humble; in the course of time it was increasingly considered as proof of having risen. Democratic sentiment thus began to shift from sympathy for the lower stratum to approval of the individual who rose above it. Basic attitudes thus tended to shift from resentment at the existence of privileged social strata toward a belief that social stratification was natural and that moral qualities were somehow correlated with economic levels.

This change has been related to the changing status of the hired man. The increased flow of immigration in the middle of the nineteenth century provided an incident for the first expression of altering attitudes toward hired help. Many of the more indigent newcomers went to work as hired hands and servants, and in many cases much of the hostility toward the strange ways of foreigners was directed toward the ranks they filled. Preceding the discovery by the farmer that he had a labor problem was a period of growing complaint at the supposedly declining quality of hired men and hired girls frequently attributed to their European origin and manners. The neighbor boy and the neighbor girl who had hired out were reported to be

supplanted by "a distinct caste," "an inferior class" of foreigners whose incompetence, vice, and ignorance had a "tendency to degrade labor." And the frequent warning was repeated that —

While Cincinnatus held the plow, the cultivation of the soil was an honorable employment. But when the prisoners . . . were compelled to hold the plow, the cultivation of the earth became too degrading an employment for the Roman soldier or citizen (35).

. . . Hired labor has in fact become a very important consideration to agriculture generally and a personal concern to a substantial proportion of farmers. By 1929, according to census figures, there were over 2,600,000 farmers (nearly 42 percent of the total) who employed hired labor, paying a total cash labor bill in that year of nearly a billion dollars.

In addition to the conditions and facts that tended to place the farmer in the ranks of employers, the influence of farm journals and agricultural-reform agencies of all kinds was in the direction of making the farmer conscious of his status as a real or potential employer with interests different from those who worked on the farm for wages. By the eighties discussion of the "farm labor problem" became a frequent feature of farm journals. When the various branches of economics began to develop special applications to agriculture, farm management and agricultural economics sought to systematize and commercialize the handling of farm labor. Almost invariably the influence of the leaders, intellectuals, and educators and reformers working in agriculture was in the direction of stratifying rural society, because they emphasized making employer-employee relationships formal and contractual. . . .

In spite of farm-management preachments, relatively few hired hands ever gave or received written contracts, but the spirit prompting the advice spread slowly over the land. It became the practice of farm-management experts to classify farm help into simple groupings, with blanket advice on the over-all virtues and defects of each. Thus a textbook on farm management published in 1921 had a chapter on "Farm Labor" in which hired help was divided into several classifications: White (Irish and Swedish), Negro, Mexican, etc. In such advice as that on "Handling Hobo or Tramp Laborers" there was an unquestioning assumption of deep social stratification.

These men should be provided with a reasonably warm, dry place to sleep, but as a rule no special housing is needed for them. They are satisfied to furnish their own bedding and sleep on a pile of hay, and to get plain food . . . if ample in quantity and well cooked.

As a class they are easily disgusted with poor machinery, and if an implement continually breaks, they are likely to quit without notice. . .

These men will not stand crowding or pressing. If any attempt is

made to drive them they will quit. Yet they can be held to the daily quitting time, although if over-time or extra work is attempted, a clear understanding must be had and extra money be paid. . . .

Sunday work is usually taboo with the real hobo.

One cannot afford to allow poker playing or gambling of any kind, or tolerate radical talk or preaching by discontented individuals (32, pp. 520-521).

Farmers in the traditional pattern of the family farm have generally been generous employers within the limits of their means. Being hard-pressed to make ends meet, they have sometimes had to pay low wages, but when farm prices boomed, as during the World War, good hired hands in the Middle West got as much as \$75 to \$125 a month with board and room. This fact, however, has not altered the course of the proprietor's growing feeling of separateness from those who work for him or might work for him. The hired hand has moved out of the parlor in most regions and out of the house in many. In some sections in the Middle West, where hired hands lived with the family a generation ago, they now live in town and carry their lunch to work.

This development has been partly the result of a complex of circumstances that has in effect frozen farm help into its inferior status. The old ladder from hiring out to proprietorship has been severely damaged, even working in reverse; and farm hands have in contemporary times become increasingly aware that they are farm hands permanently — not merely climbers on the first of a series of rungs that lead to farm ownership. The famous announcement of the Director of the Census in 1890 about the end of the frontier meant in effect that cheap land was gone and with it the opportunity for the poor man to become a proprietor. For as available land diminished, difficulties were multiplied by increased capital equipment costs. Commerce and industry became the sole remaining hope of the rural disinherited who wished to rise above poverty.

Farmers in general have inclined strongly toward paternalistic treatment of hired help. Although they have grown aware of caste distinctions, they have not in general inclined toward the psychology of exploitation. The attitudes of farmers toward the help they themselves hire has in general been subject to moral considerations of their own that prevent full development of exploitative motives. On this score farmers appear so far to have withstood partially the advice sometimes given by economists and farm-management experts, and they have seldom followed the examples of huge or highly industrial types of agricultural enterprises. The farmer's hostility to labor, where such hostility has really developed, has generally been di-

rected, not against the farm labor with whom he has contact, but rather against urban labor or the urban aspects of labor. In this case, it would seem that the immemorial distrust and dislike for the city has in effect undergone some change in that the specific urban objects of that distrust and dislike have been partially changed. Whereas a century ago the American farmer was inclined to concentrate his suspicion of the city upon the wealthy and aristocratic, he now tends more to look upon the idleness of the unemployed and the tactics of industrial unions as the most prominent symbols of urban corruption. . . .

THE PERSISTENCE OF SOME OLDER IDEAS

In very recent times, particularly in the last decade, popular confidence that virtue is inevitably rewarded by economic success has been somewhat dissipated; but the association of economic success with moral qualities remains. A strong tendency to suspect the means whereby great wealth has been acquired still exists. But cheap land and individual opportunity to win independence by thrift and industry were facts of existence for so long that a code of social ethics evolved that, persisting into a later day, seeks to solve the problems of the metropolis and the great society in frontier terms. Thus many believe that the cure for unemployment is hard work and the remedy for technological displacement, old-fashioned moderation and thrift. Both individuals and groups think and act only in terms of their experience. When they are confronted by a situation of crucial importance that is essentially novel, a confusion develops out of which they follow ordinarily one of two general types of behavior. They may appeal to a framework of fantasy, which in the case of social or political problems means faith in some utopian dream. Or they may recur to fragments of past experience connected with established patterns of behavior and, in an effort to escape their sense of inadequacy and insecurity in the new dilemma, emotionalize the older patterns of behavior into eternal standards of right and decency.

Being more at home within the older cultural pattern, farmers and rural people have been more inclined than others to see present difficulties in the light of long-established practices and standards of value. For this reason, the startling new expedients and institutions that have developed within the urban culture to meet new situations that were primarily urban and industrial were bound to arouse a hostile rural reaction in a time of psychological crisis. Relief appropriations have been perhaps the most striking example. Although the country had been acquiring city ways, it was not prepared for such devices. And in its newer forms, the ancient antagonism of the farmer

to the city has been directed principally at such innovations and in effect at that stratum of the urban population to whom the farmer once felt most akin.

CHANGING IDEALS IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

. . . There has . . . consistently been a conflict in ideals of agricultural education. There has always been a group that sought to include cultural graces and social understanding with purely vocational training. This is the element that in the tradition of the Lyceum, the self-improvement vogue, farmers' clubs and debating and literary societies, the early Grange, the country-life movement, and the Chautauqua movement has sought to improve farm life not only by economic and technological improvement but also by intellectual and social enrichment. Among agricultural educators, Kenyon L. Butterfield and Liberty Hyde Bailey were perhaps the best-known advocates of this intellectual leaven. Within the institutions of agricultural education, this group was not successful in diverting the drift toward increased emphasis upon technical specialization and commercial standards. But its participation in the country-life movement, in farm-life surveys and conferences and rural uplift generally, served nevertheless to hasten the growth of rural sociology as an academic and scientific discipline (52).

It is significant that the Country Life Commission was never given the political sanction of congressional support, for the vogue of rural uplift in the early twentieth century was limited principally to educators, clergymen, and small reform groups. It had no strong popular backing and even aroused resentment among many farmers, whose opinion seems to have been that what agriculture needed was more money, and that, with that simple need granted, farmers themselves would be amply able to look out for their own uplift. Social reform in agricultural life had in effect been professionalized; it lacked deep roots in workaday rural society. In the hands of an element largely removed from immediate contact with the soil and not harassed by the same economic difficulties that beset the farmer, it occasionally appeared to the rural mind to be both urban and condescending. The *Prairie Farmer* in its issue of June 15, 1913, described the continuing rural uplift movement as a case of "too much yeast in the dough," and expressed typical annoyance that—

There are well up toward a dozen organizations in Chicago that are trying to uplift the farmer. For the most part they are financed and managed by city men.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, agricultural economics was rapidly attaining academic respectability as well as a wide reputation

for being practical. Economics was, in effect, a much more perfect response than uplift to the pressing needs and concerns to which the farmer was then subject.

THE POPULAR ACCEPTANCE OF SCIENCE APPLIED TO AGRICULTURE

. . . During a century of what was one of the most persistent and intensive propaganda campaigns in history, the benefits of science were advertised to the rank and file of farmers; but only in the present generation has conclusive victory been attained. The intellectuals interested in agricultural progress, farm journals generally, and farm leaders and organizations, with immeasurable faith in scientific progress, have from every quarter urged farmers to adopt the latest scientific devices and methods. . . .

In spite of the ready adoption of mechanical devices by all who could afford them, farmers for generations remained generally skeptical of the heralded benefits of science in other forms. The resistance to new methods was slowly worn down, however, by the constant preaching of farm journals and other private agencies. Finally, in the years since the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, county-agent work, secondary education in agriculture, and demonstration and extension work generally have broken the last major resistance to agricultural science. . . .

Technical Progress in Many Fields

The period between 1864 and 1890 saw the development of the gang plow and the sulky, barbed wire, wheel and two-horse cultivators, spring-tooth and disk harrows, the hay loader and baler, the wire binder, improved reapers, the twine binder and bundle carrier, the silo, the cream separator, and the refrigerator car. By 1890, 910 companies, employing 39,580 men and having a capital aggregating \$145,313,997, were engaged exclusively in the manufacture of agricultural machinery. The census estimated that on the 4,564,641 farms enumerated that year there was farm machinery worth half a billion dollars. By 1890 or 1900 most of the major mechanical improvements practicable with horses for power had been developed. With the development of the tractor a great new wave of mechanization began. The 1930 census, taken before the recent great increase of mechanization based on the rubber-tired tractor and supplementary implements, reported 3½ billion dollars' worth of farm machinery on about 5,600,000 farms, or nearly \$600 per farm.

The technology of plants and animals has developed similarly through introductions from abroad, scientific breeding, and the control of diseases and insects.

This technological progress has resulted in an increase in agricultural wealth so vast and complex that it cannot well be estimated. The agricultural domain has been extended by new varieties of plants resistant to disease, drought, and cold. Yields have been increased. New plants have been found to supply special needs and to provide products that older plants could not. Losses from disease and pests have been greatly curtailed. Hand-labor requirements have been reduced, sometimes phenomenally, and the amount of land cultivable by a single farm family has been much increased (60). The reader will find elsewhere in this Yearbook a much fuller discussion of the nature and effects of agricultural technology (*The Influence of Technical Progress on Agricultural Production*, p. 509).

Technological advance has fostered specialization by increasing the need for and value of special skills. Technology has made economic specialization possible by counteracting the natural vulnerability to pests and diseases that accompanies concentration and specialization. It has increased the amount of necessary capital investment in equipment and working capital. Thus agricultural science and technology have made the farmer a much more efficient producer of agricultural supplies for the market, but they have also collaborated with other forces in the modern world to make him vitally dependent upon the working of an increasingly complex society.

The laboratory apron is rapidly becoming, for the farmer as for the rest of the world, a priestly vestment of authority. The slogans and fetishes that have accompanied the expansion of science and technology have been accepted along with sober scientific truth. If the judgment of advertisers is an indication, rural as well as city people are impressed by the vitamin content of everything from breakfast food to cold cream, and the approval of white-garbed scientists with test tubes in their hands can be a cogent recommendation of fencing, potash, hybrid corn, tooth paste, or tires for the tractor.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL FARM LEADERSHIP

Traditionally, agriculture has been conducive to democracy. Responsible local leadership has tended to develop more freely and democratically among free-holding farmers than among most other social groupings. But in the process of adjustment to the great society, what was adequate to community organization has sometimes failed to apply on a national scale. A busy farmer may assume civic responsibilities in local matters without prejudice to his farming; but when the level of activity rises to embrace the State, the region, and the Nation, it generally becomes impossible to be both an active leader and a practicing farmer. Since agriculture has been drawn into a national economic orbit, agricultural concerns of the greatest impor-

tance have become national problems, and agricultural leadership has tended correspondingly to become national, and therefore professionalized. This professional leadership has been farm-reared; but, in becoming professionalized, it has sometimes grown urban. Farm leaders have of necessity taken urban residence, developed urban associations, become partly urban in outlook. A significant proportion of farm leaders have been farm youth who went to town, made or failed to make a fortune there, and then in later life became leaders of rural reform.

The oldest national farm organization of today — the Grange — illustrates this modern tendency toward urban and professionalized farm leadership. None of the seven founders was by occupation a farmer for more than a small portion of his life. Of the 10 masters of the National Grange (second to eleventh) of whom biographical sketches are given in the official *Semi-Centennial History of the Patrons of Husbandry* (34), only two could be called practicing dirt farmers. Most of the others had spent their youth on the farm, and some engaged in farming as a hobby.

Agriculture has taken its political leadership from the town, too. The great agricultural State of Iowa, for instance, had a total of 419 elected Congressmen between 1844 and 1938. Only 15 of these are identified by the Iowa Official Register as farmers; of the rest, 309 were lawyers, 35 were bankers, 22 were editors, journalists, or publishers, 34 were businessmen (merchants, manufacturers, brokers, nurserymen, grain dealers, lumbermen) and 4 were of the learned professions. Of the total of 15 elected Congressmen who were farmers, 12 were elected to office in the period 1844-90, and not one was elected during the 40 years from 1892 to 1932. The other 3 were elected between 1932 and 1938.

In the far-flung agrarian unrest of the seventies, eighties, and nineties, a substantial proportion of the agricultural leadership rose to prominence directly from the farm. There were Sockless Jerry Simpsons as well as Ignatius Donnelly's. And although agricultural leadership has in the course of the last generation or two become increasingly professionalized, there has continued to be much dirt-farmer leadership in purely economic causes. Probably no movement was ever more genuinely indigenous than the farm-holiday movement of the early 1930's. But the contemporary situation is such that noneconomic organizations and causes cannot ordinarily depend upon popular support or leadership from farm people; farm problems have become increasingly technical in nature as well as national in scope, and farm people have generally been content to have others act for them, retaining only a veto power.

FARMERS AND MIDDLEMEN

The old agrarian distrust of devious business methods and devices has persisted and has sometimes led to strange contradictions as agriculture has been increasingly commercialized. Dislike of middlemen is as old as history. Medieval law and trade regulations were full of statutes and rules intended to curb the power of middlemen to influence prices. "Middlemen" has essentially the same unfavorable connotation today to many people that "regulators," "forestallers," and "engrossers" had to medieval yeomen. Historically, farmers have been the most consistent of all economic individualists. No group has been more thoroughly or consistently hostile to combination and monopoly and to all that savored of Big Business. Whatever was indirect was under suspicion. This eternal tendency to distrust the agencies of distribution and to suspect them of profiteering is the psychological basis upon which cooperatives have been built.

In the name of a war on speculation, monopoly, and middlemen's unfair profits, producer cooperatives were developed; yet producer cooperatives frequently have declared control of prices an aim. Thus during the campaign for producer cooperatives in 1920, the *Prairie Farmer* in its issue of September 25 printed an article entitled "Almond Growers Act Like Real Business Men; They Fix Prices and Control Their Product, and Have Run the Speculator to Cover." The article itself, like the title, emphasized the price-fixing role, and told how directors of local associations met annually to fix prices. When in 1926 the *Farm Journal* told "What the Big Co-op Can Do" (28), it emphasized the adjective "big," and declared that, among other things, it —

. . . can fix, and force buyers to accept fair and uniform grades; can establish its own brands and maintain an exclusive market for them through advertising.

. . . can afford to hire a trained sales force familiar with markets and "the tricks of the trade" . . .

. . . can secure and furnish to members reliable figures on production and consumption or probable demand.

. . . can block laws restricting co-operative sales methods, and keep legislative "hands off"; and secure and maintain any necessary tariff protection on its products.

A single farmer or a small co-op cannot do any of these things.

In January 1925 the *Pacific Rural Press* told with much enthusiasm how California poultry producers' cooperatives entered the market and by manipulative buying raised the price of eggs (27). Thus the economic necessity of holding one's own in the highly commercial modern world has forced the

farmer to engage as best he can in the very practices which he was once inclined to condemn as the peculiar corruptions of urban economy.

THE COUNTRY ADOPTS CITY WAYS

Rural life has for a century been throwing off the characteristics that once distinguished it so sharply from urban life. The countryside has been undergoing a process of accelerating urbanization for nearly a century. Country people in America have generally aspired to the refinements of middle-class urban culture and have achieved them when possible. Most of the deliberate efforts toward rural improvement during the nineteenth century were inspired by a desire to relieve farm life of the roughness that the frontier had imposed upon it. . . . Hostility to urban culture as such has not disappeared, although perhaps it has declined and been altered in its manifestations. The rural world has come in large measure to accept urban ideas of success, though it has continued the ancient tradition of decrying rural exodus and deploring the false lures and illusory opportunities of the city.

But in spite of everything, the younger farm people have been attracted to the city and to city traits and behavior; and they have been important agents in the extension of the urban culture to the country. Sympathetic commentators upon the exodus of rural youth have repeatedly explained the exodus in terms of the progressive, up-to-date temper of youth, and the backwardness and conservatism of age; they have urged modernizing — urbanizing — farm equipment and household furnishings as the measure necessary to keep youth on the farm. Here is an example from the *Nebraska Farmer* of July 1, 1885 (18):

In most cases the trouble will be found with the farmer instead of his son . . .

The old man is content with some improvements on the ideas of fifty years ago. He can't see why any one should want anything better than bare floors, Windsor chairs and cowhide boots. He would as soon go to meeting without a collar as with one. . . .

And now what's the matter with farmer's boys? They live in a new world — the father in an old one. No matter how little schooling they have had, they are better educated than he is. No matter if the father refuses to do more than subscribe to a weekly paper, his boys are fairly posted on all the daily happenings all over the world. He wants to farm after the old ideas — they after the new ones. . . .

Commercialization was only one phase of the urbanization of farm life; and it was in effect merely the means whereby farm people could obtain the products of industry that the absorption of urban culture has taught

them increasingly to desire. It was generally the case that as the agricultural frontier moved westward there had to be a period of development of the primary necessities and rudimentary capital equipment. For a time the struggle to accomplish this much exhausted the means and the energies of the agricultural settlers. But when these first needs were met, they generally sought the comforts, the refinements, the labor-saving devices, and the pleasures of a less arduous life.

When farm journals first began to print fiction, shortly before the Civil War, the stories that they ran were almost without exception especially written to fit the real or imagined tastes of a rural audience. The heroes were poor young farmers, the heroines were country girls, the villains were wealthy city men; after many vicissitudes rural simplicity and virtue triumphed over urban duplicity and corruption. But by 1900 or shortly thereafter, such fiction as appeared in farm journals — those with a large national circulation were the principal purveyors — was generally the same as that appearing in any class of popular magazines. Rural people thus read fiction based on the cultural assumptions and ideals of the urban reading masses; and country readers followed willy-nilly the vagaries and shifting fads of popular urban fiction. The country has been motivated to seek some urban refinements as a defense mechanism, adopting customs of the town while continuing to decry them. . . .

The misgiving aroused in the minds of many farmers by the decline of self-sufficiency and the spread of commercialization and urban ways, backward-looking though it sometimes was, amounted to a perception of the social and economic maladjustments that the modern world was bringing to the countryside. The farmer himself, pushed one way by the impact of the new and pulled the other by the persistence of the old, sensed the cultural conflict that was frequently ignored by professional experts, who were for the most part one-sided enthusiasts. Yet the greater force has been in the direction of change, and although there have been many regretful backward glances, farmers have, in their way, adjusted themselves to their times.

Rural free delivery, farm-to-market roads, and parcel post all resulted from agitation by farm leaders strongly supported by the masses of farmers. The mail-order house came in, disseminating widely a taste for the new products of industrial civilization by attractive illustrated catalogs and making new products actually available in remote places. The influence of these catalogs is suggested by the colloquial name for them — “wishing books” — that grew up in some of the more remote regions. Late in the nineties the movement to extend telephone service to the country began; and the building of cooperative lines, sponsored or at least suggested generally by farm organizations or farm journals, gained headway. All these things brought

the farmer closer to town and served in the end to extend the town into the country.

Wartime and early post-war prosperity brought an accelerated wave of urbanization to the country that reached an initial climax in a blaze of silk-shirt glory before prices fell in the autumn of 1920. But the trend toward urbanization of country living survived the slump. By the middle 1920's, automobile manufacturers were sure enough of the urbanity of the farmers who read farm journals and bought automobiles to advertise their product as "A regally luxurious motor car . . . beautifully engineered, beautifully built — and stylish as the *Rue de la Paix*." Each new convenience, every new gadget, has bound the country more closely to the town and made it more like the town. Educational effort indicated the virtues of more and still more contrivances to make life easier; and although for most farmers possession of these things was a dream rather than a hope, their existence has been driving ever higher the minimum desired living standard. Farmer visitors to Farm Home Week at Cornell in 1929 were shown a model farm home whose kitchen was described by the Cornell Countryman in the following terms (29):

In the kitchen . . . everything was arranged to give the housewife a convenient, pleasant work room. The electrical apparatus included a refrigerator, a range, a dish washer, and a food mixer. It had that great boon to the farm woman, a complete water system. The water was heated by an electric water heater. The range was one of the kind in whose oven you put the supper and go to town for the groceries and forget about it. The clock turns the heat on and the heat is regulated so that when you come in it is all done. The central light eliminates shadow. The switch for it also had an outlet in the bottom for a flat iron. There were local lights at the sink so you would not be working in your own shadow. There was a power outlet by the table for the food mixer, toaster, or grill, and one by the refrigerator. Every farm woman who saw it probably desired a kitchen like it, so spotlessly white and convenient with all the labor saving devices that are so needed on a farm.

The ephemeral fads and fashions of the city have penetrated to many farms. Beauty columns have entered into the farm press. We find in the *Idaho Farmer*, April 1935:

Hands should be soft enough to flatter the most delicate of the new fabrics. They must be carefully manicured, with none of the hot, brilliant shades of nail polish. The lighter and more delicate tones are in keeping with the spirit of freshness.

Keep the tint of your fingertips friendly to the red of your lips, and check both your powder and your rouge to see that they best suit the tone of your skin in the bold light of summer.

It is certain that few farm wives have a chance to heed such "beauty hints," even if they would; but the model is there, and the advice is not all lost, especially on the younger generation.

Several farm journals have for some time sponsored winter tours by farmers; and the idea has spread that farmers should get out and see the world, to broaden their outlook and to give them a vacation, in the urban sense, from the cares of everyday life. Thus, in the syndicated colloquialisms of the *Lazy Farmer*, from the *Idaho Farmer*, 1935:

I planned to take Mirandy Jane and take a trip somewhere by train or in the car, and see some sights, nor have to go to bed of nights until we'd seen most ev'rything, nor have to rise at five, by jing. Us farm folks ought to travel more, we stay at home until we're sore at ev'rything, and raisin' hob, because we're too close to our job. It does us good to git away, when we come back some other day we're fresh in body and in mind, and if the work's a mite behind, we can pitch in and git it done, and, best of all, we've had our fun.

LOSS OF THE OLD WITH ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW

It should be continually emphasized that the adoption of new things was inevitably followed, sooner or later, by the creation of new customs and new dependencies. This, in turn, involved the desertion of old ways and codes of living. This fact was in one way or another repeatedly observed, generally with regret, because the standards of value and the moral codes that constitute social adaptation to material things always outlive the things themselves. Sometimes, too, the regret was based at least partly upon a sense of social maladjustment, upon a feeling that the efficiency of an older institution had been impaired without a new one rising to take its place. Thus as long ago as 1905 one writer on rural affairs observed (68):

Social matters are not conducted as they once were among farmers. They are following in the wake of other people, and are putting more expense and formality in entertainments than of old. . . .

. . . the "neighbor woman" has gone back on her record. The doctor and hired nurse have come to take her place. She doesn't know now the uses of sage tea and catnip, or of camomile and tansy. She can not take one of her own family through a bilious attack, or spell of colic, as the old-time mother with her garret full of herbs. . . .

It takes more money to live now that people are not so serviceable nor so sociable. Farmers cannot afford to be sociable as sociability is conducted nowadays. . . . People want fine houses and furniture and expensive lighting and heating appurtenances; they want clipped horses and fine carriages, and they try to dress as near like the *elite* as possible, and to entertain their guests as sumptuously as those do who have

thrice their wealth. All this is sociability run wild — it will not endure to the end.

When, late in 1929, *Farm and Fireside* conducted a questionnaire survey among its subscribers to determine the extent of rural social change and of resistance to change, the editors were impressed, more than by anything else, by the evidence of rapid decline of differences between farm and city people. Interpretation of the results of this poll must be consistently qualified by recognition of the fact that the circulation of *Farm and Fireside* was to a disproportionate degree among the more prosperous strata of rural society and that the opinions of this group would probably not correspond to those of the majority of the whole rural population. It should also be remembered, however, that the more prosperous elements of rural society have generally been in the lead in long-time trends of change. It is this group that has generally been the first to adopt innovations that later attained wide acceptance. Although the *Farm and Fireside* survey showed rural opinion heavily against easy divorce and repeal of prohibition, 67 percent favored "legalizing doctors to impart birth control methods to married couples who apply jointly" — an opinion that the editors called "a most astonishing departure from old-fashioned standards." The survey also disclosed that articles dealing with "world events and modern thought" were the most popular of all with *Farm and Fireside* readers. One of the most significant of all was the vote on consolidated schools. It was reported that 78 percent were in favor of them. On this vote *Farm and Fireside* commented (30):

Distinctly on the side of progress is the vote as to consolidated schools. They cost money, a good deal of money; they represent what old-timers call citified, new-fangled nonsense, but the countryside of America clamors for them, four votes out of five.

What may well be the earliest complete repudiation of the old agrarian social code by a spokesman for agriculture occurred, as might be expected, in a region where farming has been more industrialized and farm life less distinctly rural than in any other large section of the country. In 1915, the *Pacific Rural Press* reprinted a little story from a midwestern farm paper. This is the story.

A man and a woman sat together at a theater one afternoon last week. He wore a cheap suit of clothing that fitted him poorly. Her dress was not in the latest mode. Plainly, they were from the country.

Right behind them sat two women of the city. One of them put her lorgnette to her eyes, bent forward and looked critically at the woman in front of her. Then she settled back in her chair and said in a voice evidently intended for the woman in front to hear: "Why do

some people have such awful taste as to dress as they used to before the flood?"

The woman in front heard it and her face went red. The man with her heard it too, and he quietly laid his hand upon his companion's arm and patted it lovingly.

A man who sat near, and had heard and seen this little tragedy, told of it afterward. "I knew the man from the country, and his wife," he said. "I know that she is his partner in running that farm. Her vegetables, butter and eggs provide an important part of their income. Now they have come to the city for an outing. To my mind they belong to the class who are really our best people, and the woman behind them with the lorgnette is just a coarse, vulgar frump" (25).

This was an almost perfect example of the stereotyped homily that had appeared thousands of times in farm journals for nearly a century in expression of the older agrarian social creed. But the Pacific Rural Press reprinted it only in order to make its modern comment:

Of course, our Middle West contemporary has to preach upon the text this incident presents, but it needs no sermon here. In the first place, we believe our rural women are relatively better dressed than elsewhere, and therefore the incident would have no local foundation. . . . Our point is that the contrast between rural and urban women in costuming is probably less in California than anywhere else in the world. And we are of the impression also that California rural women are not infrequently outfitted to do the lorgnette act toward the urban women were they not prevented by inborn politeness. . . . (25).

The Conflict Between the Old and the New

. . . American agriculture has lived through a long series of cultural conflicts during the past century. There has been almost continuous conflict between folkways and folklore on the one hand and applications of scientific rationality on the other. The intellectual and reform elements in agriculture have invariably sought to hasten and to alter the direction of our cultural evolution. There was a conflict in the middle-western agricultural regions in the ante bellum period between the matter-of-fact, severely practical culture, inherited principally from New England and the Middle Atlantic States, and the idealism and optimism fostered by the intellectuals of that period. There has consistently been a conflict between the moral concept of the farmer, developed in part out of older experience but perpetuated by the literary tradition of agrarian fundamentalism, and new realities brought into being by the commercialization of agriculture. Thus the literary tradition has it that the farmer is independent and secure unto himself — which in

most cases he has manifestly ceased to be; that he is remote from the ills and corruptions of the market place and unenvious of urban luxuries — which ordinarily he obviously cannot be.

This concept of the farm as a gentle haven from the world's strife is in flat contradiction to the tendencies toward commercialization, mechanization, specialization, and urbanization that are the dominant trends of modern agriculture. And yet it is a fact that this idyllic agrarian fundamentalism has been perpetuated principally by the intellectual and reform elements that have been most active in modernizing American agriculture.

Farm people themselves, genuinely devoted as they may be to country life, have not fooled themselves in this way. They have been too close to the monotony of chores, the dust of harrowing, the threat of drought and pests and disease. Yet among some professional agricultural leaders and educators there has evidently been a desire to idealize rural life in a moral and aesthetic way, and also to see agriculture principally in terms of the most prosperous group of farmers. In order to establish good examples for emulation, or because of class or economic predilections, the farmer has thus been identified with a level of ease, equipment, well-being, and prosperity far above any average for the Nation as a whole. Thus a secondary school text in farm management, written 26 years ago by one of the most capable experts in the field, displayed as the first of many illustrations a photograph with the legend, "An American Farm Home" (41, p. 8). The inevitable implication was that the house shown was average or typical. Actually, however, the picture portrayed the hobby farm of a wealthy city man far out of the class of anything that could be called an average or typical farm. In another high-school text on agriculture published in 1939 is a photograph flat-footedly captioned "An airplane view of a typical farm in the North Central Region" (42, p. 3). This "typical" farmstead includes a white house of apparently 8 to 10 rooms; a windmill and pump house; a poultry house large enough for at least 1,000 chickens, with incubator and brooder space extra; a dairy barn large enough for 40 or more milk cows in addition to stalls for horses; hog houses to take care of a dozen or more brood sows, and shelter also for shoats; a large milkshed; and in addition one large building that looks like a machinery shed, another apparently a garage or workshop, and another that seems to be a large crib for grain storage.

Incidents of this kind would be trivial were it not that they indicate the frequent confusion of the real and the ideal in thinking about agriculture and that — much more important — they illustrate the social stratification of agricultural ideas that corresponds to the social stratification that has been developing in fact. The majority of educational, reform, and adjustment programs have tended strongly to be directed toward the benefit of a

class of farmers who came nearest to corresponding to the abstract conception of the farmer suggested by such illustrations as are noted above.

Thus both the deliberate attempts to improve agriculture and rural life and the untoward, uncontrolled social forces of this age have for the most part concentrated their benefits upon the more prosperous element of the farm population. For only the more prosperous ones have been able to take full advantage of modern technology and commercialism. And while this upper economic stratum has had its living standards raised rapidly, the lower stratum has not been able to follow. As a result the cleavage between the two has grown increasingly wider. The rising proportions of tenancy and farm indebtedness, the growing population pressure in many rural regions, the dramatic migrations of the disinherited are other symptoms of the growing stratification of rural society.

Beyond a doubt the present trends are forcefully directed toward a great split in the agricultural population — the upper group, inclined to take on more and more of the traits of the urban and small-town middle class, while the lower economic stratum seems destined for wage-labor status within a society in which caste consciousness and class lines based on economic means are developing to a rigidity previously unknown among freemen in this country.

A situation has been created out of which new kinds of economic disparities and social dislocations have developed. Measures conceived in traditional terms, although helpful, have generally failed to achieve any substantial adjustment. The inadequacy of older institutions and arrangements, even as means to attain the substance of older ideals and aspirations, has become more apparent as the modern situation has intensified. As a result the boundless confidence and optimism by which the agricultural domain of this country was first settled and made productive have been increasingly qualified by bewilderment and pessimism, and the former ideal of progress is giving ground to a new ideal of security.

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ECONOMIC SOURCES OF AGRARIAN DISUNITY

Politicians, historians, and some special-pleading farm groups have long had in common a distressing propensity for making undifferentiated references to a creature called "the farmer." Usually, "the farmer" is described as a ruggedly individualistic, much abused, long-suffering, now hopelessly outnumbered fellow who toils at a calling as near to God as one can get short of taking the cloth. More recently, younger, city-bred and city-oriented historians have revised the picture so that "the farmer" appears as a provincial, self-centered, belly-oriented fellow whose presumed long suffering derives from his own incompetence and folly. Though much heat has been generated in the controversy thus defined, those who have delved beneath the generalities have noted the great diversity among agricultural interests that makes "the farmer" a rather vacuous phrase. Paul Johnstone, (p. 198, above) makes a point of the "cleavage" that has developed between the upper and lower economic strata of farmers, and he observes how "both the deliberate attempts to improve agriculture and rural life and the untoward, uncontrolled social forces of this age have for the most part concentrated their benefits upon the more prosperous element of the farm population." M. S. Venkataramani (pp. 462ff., below) makes this point more specifically. In the following article, H. Clarence Nixon shows how cleavages within the farming community figured vitally in the politics of the populist era.

The presidential election of 1896 is one of the most frequently examined elections of our history. [The best published studies still appear in the journals. See especially W. Diamond, "Urban and Rural Voting in 1896," *American Historical Review*, XLVI (Jan. 1941); G. C. Fite, "Republican Strategy and the Farm Vote in the Presidential Campaign of 1896," *ibid.*, LXV (July 1960); V. O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, XVII (Feb. 1955); A. I. Westin, "The Supreme Court, the Populist Movement, and the Campaign of 1896," *ibid.*, XV (Feb. 1953); J. A. Barnes, "Myths of the Bryan Campaign," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIV (Dec. 1947); C. N. Degler, "American Political Parties and the Rise of the City," *Journal of American History*, LI (June 1964); J. R. Hollingsworth, "The Historian, Presidential Elections, and 1896," *Mid-America*, XLV (July 1963). S. L. Jones' *The Presidential Election of 1896* (1964) is disappointingly superficial.] Until that year, the elec-

torate appeared evenly divided between the Democrats and the GOP. In four of the previous five Presidential elections, the Democratic candidate won a plurality of the popular vote, and in the fifth case (1880) he missed by the smallest margin in history. In the ten congressional elections between 1874 and 1892, moreover, the Democrats captured a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives eight times. But in 1896, the Republicans established for the first time a durable coalition that enabled the party to dominate national politics for most of the next thirty-six years.

Historians have usually noted that Bryan's campaign failed badly among urban voters. The Democratic and Populist candidate won only twelve of the eighty-two cities in the country with a population of over 45,000, and seven of the twelve were in the South. He even lost normally Democratic New York City and Boston. Although most of the cities in those days usually gave majorities to the GOP, McKinley improved the Republican urban margin substantially. To explain this result, historians have generally stressed, first, that Bryan's emphasis on the silver issue antagonized not only some traditionally Democratic commercial and banking groups that had long been the bulwark of the party, but also thousands of wage-earners who feared that silver inflation would reduce their real income; second, that Bryan's image as a representative of evangelical Protestantism made him suspect among the predominantly Catholic rank and file in the urban Democratic organizations. Some, such as J. A. Barnes, have noted in addition the threats by factory owners to close their plants if Bryan won, though C. N. Degler contends that there is too little evidence to support this view. Degler argues that the panic of 1893 and the depression that followed led voters of all classes to strike out — blindly — against the Democrats as the incumbent party, so that intimidation was unnecessary. Although Bryan had effectively transformed Grover Cleveland's Democracy into a party radically different from the stolid champion of "Do Nothingism" that it had been, it was still the Democratic party and not the GOP that bore the responsibility for the "gold conspiracy" with J. P. Morgan, for breaking the Pullman strike with federal troops, and for refusing aid to farmers. Bryan, moreover, never suggested that he understood, much less that he sympathized with, the social problems generated by urban growth, so that to a fast-growing corps of social workers and civic reformers in America the revolution in the Democratic party had as yet little real meaning.

As a rule, historians have paid less attention to Bryan's failure in *agricultural* districts as well as in the industrial ones. G. N. Fite has recently emphasized the difficulty Bryan had in breaking the hold that the Grand Old Party had upon conservative farmers in the midwest; noting that the farm journals on the whole remained loyal to the GOP, Fite attempts to revive the contention that a rise in wheat prices in October, 1896, seriously undermined the Democrats' silver-inflationist argument while it reduced the distress which the Democrats counted on to bring traditionally Republican farm districts over. (As Barnes points

out, however, most of "the wheat states" voted for Bryan. But no one has differentiated the vote in other states that went for McKinley to see if a McKinley plurality in wheat-producing districts there affected the outcome.)

Generally, the Democrats could hope to win only those usually Republican districts which had been expressing grievances. What H. C. Nixon does here is to describe the clashes of interest among even the *militant* farmers whose various anxieties had led them into "alliances," "wheels," and other action groups. These divisions help explain why Bryan failed to make the gains he expected among "the farmers."

Nixon's "The Populist Movement in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, XXIV (Jan. 1926), H. Farmer's "The Economic Background of Frontier Populism," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, X (1924), and R. C. Miller's "The Background of Populism in Kansas," *ibid.*, XI (1925), also should be of interest.

The Cleavage Within the Farmers' Alliance Movement

H. CLARENCE NIXON

Lines of internal cleavage more significant than traditional sectionalism or differences in organization and party attitudes, characterized the agrarian movement that found expression largely in the Farmers' Alliance organizations during the eighties and nineties. This development of cleavage tended, in advance of 1896, to place the South and, in part, the new West on one side, the Middle West on the other. Explanation of this agrarian rift must take account of a divergence and even an antagonism of economic interests, with one phase revealing the southern farmers as champions and their northern brothers as opponents of the miracles of chemistry in industry.

When farmer and labor delegations met in national conventions in St. Louis in December, 1889, the two national organizations considered union or combination, but in vain. In the South "embattled farmers" had organized spontaneously, forming "alliances" in Texas, "unions" in Louisiana, and "wheels" in Arkansas. These drew together and were consolidated in one secret organization in 1889, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., adopting in St. Louis the name of National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union. Another group meeting in St. Louis at the same time was the Na-

tional Farmers' Alliance, which had been organized nationally in Chicago in 1880 on a non-secret and non-partisan basis and had developed strength chiefly in the Middle West. Failing to combine, these two farmers' organizations became known respectively as the Southern Alliance and the Northwestern or Northern Alliance, though the former gained control over the organizations of Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Colorado.¹

Why did failure to arrange union result from the elaborate committee work in St. Louis, preceded and accompanied, as it was, by much other manipulation toward the same end? It might be answered that the Southern Alliance was more numerous in membership, more militant, nationally affiliated with the Knights of Labor, and moving with less disguise and restraint toward third-party politics, in consequence of which the older and milder Alliance stood against union except on an autonomy-preserving basis, which the larger order denied.² The question of the membership of colored persons and the existence of the Colored Farmers' Alliance furnished surmountable difficulties,³ though the Southern Alliance was to go on record as condemning the Lodge election bill.⁴ The way was left open for the political opportunist to use the sectional issue and denounce the "Kansas-Southern Farmers' Alliance" or "the old unregenerate south in a new form and under a new name."⁵ Disagreement among leaders in St. Louis over the method of union was furthermore motivated, according to reports, by spoils of national office, which would be less in one organization than in two.⁶ This criticism was not discounted by the subsequent exchange of unhandsome compliments between the two camps.⁷

But there were other factors to prevent the union or real solidarity of these groups. "Naturally," ran a St. Louis news interpretation, "there are questions of supreme importance to the northern farmers which do not ma-

¹ *Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1890 (New York, 1891), 299-301; F. W. Drew, "The Present Farmers' Movement," *Political Science Quarterly*, VI, 285-86; W. S. Morgan, *History of the Wheel and Alliance and the Impending Revolution* (St. Louis, 1891), 113-34.

² *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, Dec. 6, 7, 1889; H. C. Nixon, "The Populist Movement in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, XXIV, 44-65; *Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1890, pp. 299-301.

³ *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, Dec. 7, 1889.

⁴ H. R. Chamberlain, *The Farmers' Alliance. What It Aims to Accomplish* (New York, 1891), 40-43. The Lodge election bill, also designated as the "force bill," was designed to protect southern negro votes in Congressional elections through federal regulation and supervision, especially where fraud or violence might be anticipated. It passed the House in 1890 but was checked in the Senate by a coalition of Democrats and free-silver Republicans.

⁵ *Iowa Tribune* (Des Moines), April 15, Nov. 18, 1891, quoting the *Iowa State Register*.

⁶ *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, Dec. 7, 1889.

⁷ *Western Rural* (Chicago), June 6, 1891.

terially affect the southern tillers.”⁸ Agrarian reformers of all sections might unite in fighting the three alleged monopolies of land, money, and transportation, though the transportation cost cut more deeply into the market price of western grain and livestock than of southern cotton. In the earlier Granger days it had been observed that “cotton was ‘king,’ only because it could bear transportation.”⁹ The Northern Alliance was attacking the railway issue and suggesting government ownership of the Union Pacific before the Southern Alliance had even touched the general issue in national resolutions.¹⁰

Southern farmers wanted lower prices for bagging to wrap their cotton, and hence the Southern Alliance was interested in fighting the “bagging trust,” or the “jute trust,”¹¹ while Alliance groups in the upper part of the Mississippi Valley were interested in fighting the “binder-twine trust.”¹² Southern Alliance farmers had hardly discarded rail fences, while many middle western farmers were organizing to fight the “barbed-wire trust.”¹³

The Southern Alliance in St. Louis in 1889 presented and advocated a “subtreasury” scheme, by which the federal government was to establish county warehouses and other machinery for making loans to farmers on staple products, as grain, cotton, and tobacco, up to eighty per cent of the market value at an interest rate of one per cent with additional charges for handling, storage, and insurance.¹⁴ In modified forms the proposal was introduced as bills in Congress by two Georgians, L. F. Livingston, president of the State Alliance, and Thomas E. Watson.¹⁵ It was supported by numerous petitions from Southern Alliance members, who wanted to check the use of crop mortgages, so prevalent among southern farmers. But this scheme, which did not meet the needs or desires of dairymen and hog-raisers, was not adopted by the Northern Alliance in St. Louis. It was claimed to be an important issue in the cleavage between the two Alliances.¹⁶ An agricultural paper and ardent champion of the Northern Alliance considered that the adoption of the subtreasury system “would be the worst calamity that

⁸ St. Louis *Daily Globe-Democrat*, Dec. 7, 1889.

⁹ W. M. Grosvenor, “The Railroads and the Farms,” *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXII, 592.

¹⁰ Drew, *loc. cit.*, 299.

¹¹ *Southern Mercury* (Dallas), July 18, 1889; St. Louis *Daily Globe-Democrat*, Dec. 5, 1889.

¹² *Age* (Clinton, Iowa), March 29, 1889; *National Economist* (Washington, D. C.), June 29, 1889.

¹³ *Western Rural*, Feb. 7, 1885; *Iowa Homestead* (Des Moines), Jan. 1, May 7, 1886.

¹⁴ Morgan, *op. cit.*, 175-84. The plan, presumably the work of L. F. Livingston and C. W. Macune, was expanded the following year, on demands of Westerners, to embrace loans on real estate. A. M. Arnett, *The Populist Movement in Georgia* (New York, 1922), 103, 126.

¹⁵ *Cong. Record*, 52 Cong., 1 Sess., Index to Vol. 23.

¹⁶ *Iowa Homestead*, July 18, 1890; N. B. Ashby, *The Riddle of the Sphinx* (Des Moines, 1890), 437-53.

ever befell the agricultural interests."¹⁷ Farmers' Alliance leaders in Minnesota protested against the subtreasury plan.¹⁸ When the National Grange, meeting in Atlanta in 1890, made a statement in favor of government loans to the people, the Michigan State Grange declared the scheme would "prove a curse instead of a blessing."¹⁹ It was for government loans on lands rather than on warehouse receipts that demands on Congress came from northern and western farmers' organizations.²⁰

The rise of synthetic food products in the eighties divided the agricultural forces of the nation on the issue of public control and restriction. The National Farmers' Alliance of the North throughout its history was an advocate of restricting the new products, manifesting a motive more vitally concerned with the interest of the producers of the old foods than with that of the consumers of the new products. Two important items in this contest were oleomargarine and compound, or vegetable lard.

Not satisfied with local regulation in about twenty states, representatives of dairy interests in twenty-six states met in New York City, in 1886, to urge Congress to intervene in behalf of their fight on oleomargarine.²¹ To these interests it seemed that American oleomargarine was suddenly and rapidly capturing their butter market, having already displaced "one-fifth of the purest product of the dairy" and reduced the price of dairy cows ten dollars per head. An Iowa official report declared that the "advent of bogus butter cut the value of dairy stock right in two by the middle."²² It was claimed that oleomargarine could be manufactured at a cost of seven to eight cents per pound, that the national production had reached two hundred million pounds per annum, and that this development was bringing depression to more than four million citizens engaged in dairying, with an annual business of half a billion dollars.²³ During the next few years petitions bombarded Congress for the securing, continuing, or expanding of legal restrictions on the production and sale of oleomargarine. These came prevailingly from the agrarian interests and organizations of the northern state. But beef fat and cottonseed oil were used in manufacturing the new product, and it was noted that opposition to restriction came from "the great cattle kings of the far West," the cottonseed crushers' association of the South, and oleomargarine manufacturers, including the Armour, Swift, and N. K. Fairbank

¹⁷ *Iowa Homestead*, June 20, 1890. The editor of this paper at the time was Henry Wallace, father of the late Secretary of Agriculture.

¹⁸ *Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1890, p. 300.

¹⁹ Drew, *loc. cit.*, 296.

²⁰ *Iowa Homestead*, Feb. 13, 1891; *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 1792, 2875, 3184, 4752, 5917, and Index.

²¹ *Cong. Record*, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., 4865-66, 7187.

²² *Annual Report of the Board of Railroad Commissioners of Iowa*, 1886, p. 53.

²³ *House Reports*, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 2028.

companies.²⁴ The latter asserted that the new product made a difference of three dollars per head in the price of beef-cattle.

The first national law to tax and regulate oleomargarine was prepared and passed, in 1886, by a Democratic House, to be approved by a Democratic President. Yet cotton-belt congressmen fought it bitterly as unconstitutional, as economic discrimination and as interference with cheap food for consumers and labor classes. The eleven cotton states cast 66 of the 101 votes against the measure in the House and 18 of the 24 negative votes in the Senate. A senator from Virginia was the only Southerner voting in the affirmative in the upper house, the southern vote for the proposal in the other house being twelve.²⁵

While oleomargarine invaded the butter market, compound lard²⁶ and vegetable shortening offered a similar threat to the market for hog lard. The new lard products unfavorably affected pork-packing and hog-raising but stimulated the market for beef stearine and furnished a favorable boon to the new and rapidly growing cottonseed oil industry. The intensity with which different farming interests clashed through organizations and through agitation in Washington as aids in this battle between the manufacturers of two kinds of shortening is suggested by two associated facts: first, that full reports on cottonseed were collected by the national census office for the first time in 1890; second, that in the same year "hogs sold at lower prices at Chicago, December 20th, than at any time since September, 1879."²⁷

The statistics of the situation were not pleasing to the hog-raisers or to those pork-packers who were not going over to chemical "frauds" or "counterfeit lard." Compound lard was estimated, in 1888, to constitute about half of the total of 600,000,000 pounds of lard produced in the country and about forty per cent of the 320,000,000 pounds exported; and this compound consisted of mixtures of pure lard, beef stearine, and cottonseed oil, with the oil estimated at forty per cent.²⁸ It was a little later calculated that the compound was making an annual net market displacement of 160,000,000 pounds of hog lard and furnishing a use for one-third of the annual production of cottonseed oil.²⁹ The claims were further made that the new industry reduced the value of 50,000,000 American hogs thirty-two and even eighty cents per head.³⁰

²⁴ *Cong. Record*, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., 4905, 4908-09, 4915.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5213, 7202. Division on the measure was most striking in votes from border states and metropolitan centers like New York and Chicago.

²⁶ In the strict sense "compound lard" implied a combination including vegetable oil, beef stearine, and hog lard, though in popular discussion the term was often used for all substitutes for pure hog lard.

²⁷ *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1890, p. 41.

²⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 1888 (United States), 248-49.

²⁹ *House Reports*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 970.

³⁰ *Ibid.*; *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 8964.

The production of compound lard was associated with Chicago as the chief center, with Armour and Co. and N. K. Fairbank and Co. as the leading manufacturers.³¹ To furnish the oil, cottonseed oil mills were already dotting the cotton belt from New Orleans to St. Louis and from Augusta to Houston, paying out annually over \$15,000,000 for seed.³² There was support or sympathy for compound lard from cotton factors of the East, many cattlemen of the West, and from organizations or groups of grocers of cities including Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Minneapolis.³³ The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* not only noted the influence of the new industry on the markets for cottonseed oil and beef products but emphasized the superior "keeping qualities" of compound lard for export.³⁴ One assertion placed the cost of compound lard production at three-fourths that of hog lard,³⁵ and the cheaper food argument made possible appeal to, for, and by labor groups. It was not easy to envisage a Gettysburg for this new invasion from the cotton country.

As the farmers and the Alliances went forth to war with each other, the line of battle was marked chiefly by the Conger lard bill. This bore the name of a congressman from Iowa, the leading hog-raising state, which had already paid its own legislative respects to compound lard and officially asked for national legislation on the subject.³⁶ Introduced in December, 1889, two years after the first attempt to secure compound-lard regulation by Congress, it followed the principles of the oleomargarine legislation in providing taxation and regulation of the manufacture and sale of the product under elaborate administration of the collector of internal revenue.³⁷

In support of such legislation there were more than four hundred entries of petitions or sets of petitions in the *Congressional Record* for the first session of the Fifty-second Congress alone, with nearly a third as many opposing entries.³⁸ Though the agrarian assembly of Iowa was a champion of the measure, the Assembly of Colorado and the Idaho Senate remonstrated against it.³⁹ Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois showed a striking division of interests, with agrarian preferences leaning to the bill. The Northern Alliance was the chief organization through which supporting petitions were presented. Its national secretary, August Post of Iowa, made visits to Washing-

³¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture*, 1888, p. 244; *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 8968.

³² *House Misc. Documents*, 52 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 340, Part 20, p. 61.

³³ As indicated by numerous petitions presented to the Fifty-first Congress.

³⁴ Editorial, March 8, 1890.

³⁵ *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 8961.

³⁶ *Laws of Iowa*, 1888, cf. 79 and 239.

³⁷ *House Reports*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., Nos. 970, 2857.

³⁸ Index to Vol. 23, pp. 357-58.

³⁹ *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 2347; 2 Sess., 3044, 3519.

ton to lobby for the lard legislation, seeing Speaker Reed in the interest of the cause.⁴⁰ In supporting the Conger bill, the Iowa state unit of the Northern Alliance denounced the compound-lard business as a "fraud practiced on the farmers of Iowa by the unholy combination of Chicago pork packers, western ranchmen, southern planters, and the cottonseed oil trust."⁴¹

"Hogs in Politics" was the heading of an editorial in which the *Dallas News*⁴² made the observation, "It appears . . . that the farming interest of the North is making a grab at profit at the expense of the farming interest of the South. Such a course of conduct arrays members of the alliance against each other unless the southern branches are willing to quietly submit to an injustice." This paper denounced the scheme as similar to the oleomargarine law, which was due to "the predatory instincts of northern dairymen." It found a new solidity of the South, including the negroes and threatening "both the alliance management in the North and the Republican party if compound lard shall be put in the internal revenue list."

Southern Alliances and southern congressmen were active in opposing the bill, with such exceptions, however, as the leader who thought the lard battle was a sham to detract attention from financial ills,⁴³ or the representative from East Tennessee who declared, "my constituents raise hogs."⁴⁴ They seemed little deterred by an opposition claim that "every quart of cottonseed oil today is controlled by the cottonseed oil trust, and the farmer of the South takes just exactly what this 'combine' gives him and no more."⁴⁵ The national president of the Southern Alliance, L. L. Polk of North Carolina, and eleven southern state presidents met in Atlanta in March, 1890, and sent to Congress a plea to defeat the pending lard bill as unwise class legislation.⁴⁶ The southern organization was to repeat its criticism in a national convention the following December in Ocala, Florida, declaring that the proposal to tax compound lard "arrays the farmer of the North against the cotton planter of the South and the cattle raiser of the West."⁴⁷ It advocated the alternate proposal bearing the name of Senator Paddock of Nebraska and providing for general regulation of foods without taxation features. A more unique criticism came from the National Colored Farmers' Alliance and Coöperative Union, assembled in Ocala at the same time and claiming to represent two million colored farmers in twelve states.

⁴⁰ *Iowa Homestead*, Aug. 29, 1890; *Western Rural*, Nov. 7, 1891.

⁴¹ *Proceedings of the Iowa Farmers' Alliance*, 1890 (Des Moines), 33.

⁴² *Dallas Morning News*, March 2, 1890. See also issues of Feb. 24, April 14, 1890.

⁴³ Drew, *loc. cit.*, 299, quoting *National Economist*, Feb. 14, 1891. C. W. Macune, leading editor of this journal, opposed the Conger bill and stressed financial issues.

⁴⁴ *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 8965.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8962. The statement was by Representative Allen of Michigan.

⁴⁶ *House Reports*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 970.

⁴⁷ *Iowa Homestead*, Jan. 9, 1891; *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 358.

This body sent to Washington a telegram of protest against the Conger bill, "which proposes to tax compound lard and depress the price of cottonseed and cottonseed oil" and could be surpassed by no legislation since the laws of slavery as "injurious to the colored race." Moreover, serious decline in the price of "cottonseed, the colored man's crop," was noted as "commencing with the introduction of the Conger bill."⁴⁸

Pleas from colored citizens and organizations were utilized as strategic data more abundantly than protests of cotton exchanges by southern congressmen in opposing the Conger bill. Emphasis was placed on the general interests of colored men as cotton growers and their particular interest in cottonseed as about their only means of surplus cash in the autumn, since their cotton was so generally mortgaged in advance. A negro organization leader was quoted as asserting in the congressional committee hearing that the issue was "western hog against southern negro" and that if the bill passed the Republican Congress the agricultural colored people of the South would cut loose from the party.⁴⁹ W. C. Oates, representing an Alabama district, said the situation furnished a test of the sincerity of the Republicans who voted for the Lodge election bill, for the Conger bill affected the negro's material interest. "In a contest between the negro and the hog they take the side of the hog with a few honorable exceptions."⁵⁰

The bill to tax compound lard passed the lower house in August, 1890, in the midst of bitter wrangling and attempts of the opposition at delay. The vote was 126 to 33, with more than sixty pairs. Five from Tennessee and Virginia were the only affirmative votes from the South.⁵¹ The measure met snags in the Senate, where it had to face competition with the Paddock proposal for general regulation of food and drugs through the Department of Agriculture. Compound lard was safe from taxation, though the issue came up in Congress the next year and the next. Friction between the two Alliances remained, the *Iowa Homestead* continuing to criticize the Southern Alliance as being unsuited to the Northwest and as having "had for its prime motive from the start the formation of a gigantic cotton trust."⁵² And the National Farmers' League had spread into other states after its organization in Massachusetts for a legislative fight against oleomargarine and western dressed beef.⁵³ The rapid increase in food production had brought on a scramble for control of markets.

Dairying, hog-raising, and agricultural diversification tended to bring

⁴⁸ *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 2 Sess., 158.

⁴⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, April 10, 1890.

⁵⁰ *Cong. Record*, 51 Cong., 1 Sess., 8968-69.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9278-79.

⁵² *Iowa Homestead*, April 10, 1891.

⁵³ *Drew, loc. cit.*, 289.

about a solidarity between the farmers of the Middle West and those of the East, setting them off somewhat from the cotton South and from the grain-and-cattle West. The Middle West surpassed the South and the newer West in agrarian prosperity in the nineties. Sure crops and diversification were given even by a leading Populist paper as an explanation of Iowa's escape from the storm in the panic of 1893.⁵⁴ In spite of compound lard, it was claimed that "for the 'plain people' of the agricultural West the hog has been king."⁵⁵ It was not insignificant that, in 1893, mess pork reached its highest price in ten years.⁵⁶ Dairying had already helped silence Greenback sentiment in Wisconsin,⁵⁷ and this industry was also contributing to economic conservatism in adjacent states. Agriculture was attaining to a business, capitalistic basis in the older Middle West, from Ohio to Iowa and Minnesota, a region which voted more than seven to one in both houses for Cleveland's proposal for silver-purchase repeal in 1893, while the solid South and the regions from Kansas westward offered handsome majorities in the other direction, with nine proposals coming out of the South for the repeal of the tax on state banknote circulation.⁵⁸

The two National Farmers' Alliance organizations reflected this divergence in economic influence in their attitudes toward the Populist party. The Southern Alliance, with its affiliated Reform Press Association, displayed more propagandic interest in an "impending revolution." The Populist National Convention in Omaha in 1892 had evolved from the Southern Alliance conventions of the past two years. In spite of internal opposition, the Southern Alliance became rather closely identified with the third party. James B. Weaver worked through the Southern Alliance and the Populist party simultaneously in the hope of uniting the South and the West in "the battle of the ages on the financial issues."⁵⁹

The National Farmers' Alliance of the North reflected more conservatism and less interest in the third party movement. This policy contributed to its loss of membership to the Southern Alliance west of the Mississippi.⁶⁰ But, though there was much internal agitation and the adoption of radical resolutions on economic issues, up to 1896, the national leaders of the Northern Alliance generally tried to steer it clear of third parties. August Post, the national secretary in the nineties, emphasized the nonpartisanship of the

⁵⁴ *Farmers' Tribune* (Des Moines), July 26, 1893.

⁵⁵ *Iowa Homestead*, Sept. 18, 1896.

⁵⁶ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1894, p. 4410.

⁵⁷ C. O. Ruggles, "The Economic Basis of the Greenback Movement in Iowa and Wisconsin," *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, VI, 142-65.

⁵⁸ *Cong. Record*, 53 Cong., 1 Sess., Index to Vol. 25. Border states are not included in these calculations.

⁵⁹ Nixon, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

organization, which, in 1895, passed a national resolution repeating opposition to political party action.⁶¹ The Weaver following was unable to control the branch of this Alliance in his own state, while the Southern Alliance, organized in Iowa by the Populists, did not attain to the success or membership of its state rival. Moreover, the *Western Rural* of Chicago, which sponsored the national organization of the Northern Alliance and financed it for many years, advocated non-partisan political methods and the achievement of farmer relief through the party in power, definitely refusing commitment to any party in the year Weaver was Populist candidate for President.⁶² Milton George, editor of the *Western Rural* when the Northern Alliance was nationally organized in Chicago and for some years the national secretary of the organization, announced support of the Republican party in 1896. "The father of the Farmers' Alliance — flopping right over into the camp of the millionaires, trusts, monopolies and combines that have been robbing the farmers for years."⁶³

The Middle West, which had been the territorial heart of the Granger movement, thus tended to play a non-partisan rôle in the Farmers' Alliance movement. The Populist vote, both in 1892 and 1894, was below eight per cent of the total in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin, and far from first place in Minnesota.⁶⁴ The agrarians of this section wanted reform but not revolution, government regulation of certain economic activities but not an opening of the floodgates of inflation. They had clashed with southern agrarians over the issue of market protection for lard and butter. They had shown, in the main, an alignment with the East on monetary issues in 1893. They had experienced an agricultural development that was a factor in limiting the Bryan West to the hinterland beyond Iowa and Minnesota. In consequence, it may with some degree of truth be said that McKinley owed his election in 1896 to the milch cow and the hog as well as to Mark Hanna and big business.

⁶¹ *Western Rural*, Feb. 7, 1895.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Jan. 29, 1887, April 30, 1892.

⁶³ T. C. Engle, *ibid.*, Oct. 15, 1896.

⁶⁴ F. E. Haynes, "The New Sectionalism," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, X, 269-95.

LIBERALISM AND THE AMERICAN REFORM TRADITION

A substantial body of literature on the nature of the Populist contribution to reform has grown in recent years, partly in response to Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform* (1955). Hofstadter, who takes a "hard" view of the militant agrarian movement, argues that "Populism can best be understood . . . as another episode in the well-established tradition of American entrepreneurial radicalism, which goes back at least to the Jacksonian era. It was an effort on the part of a few important segments of a highly heterogeneous capitalistic agriculture to restore profits in the face of much exploitation and under unfavorable market and price conditions." [pp. 58-59] Failing to recognize their true situation, the Populists offered chimerical remedies weighted with nostalgia, which failed to grapple adequately with the complexities of an international and industrial economy. Most serious of their foibles was a tendency to approach their problems as moral absolutists, and to regard their competitors as evil conspirators. In this tendency Hofstadter sees the portent of popular authoritarian movements of later times, such as those fostered by William Lemke, Father Charles Coughlin, Huey Long, and Senator Joseph McCarthy. "It is not too much to say," Hofstadter asserts at one point, "that the Greenback-Populist tradition activated most of what we have of modern popular anti-Semitism in the United States," and he suggests that the similarities between Populist rhetoric and the later more rancorous popular movements are more than merely fortuitous.

Mr. Hofstadter very carefully hedges his link of Populism with later phobic maladies, but he has nevertheless inspired some to use his conclusions without their subtleties and others to descend upon him in fury for ostensibly sullyng a noble cause. Professor Woodward, in the article that follows, discusses several commentators in the first category; Norman Pollack's "Hofstadter on Populism: A Critique of 'The Age of Reform,'" [*Journal of Southern History*, XXVI (Nov. 1960)] stands out in the second. [See also V. C. Ferkiss, "Populist Influences on American Fascism," *Western Political Quarterly*, X (1957); N. Pollack, *The Populist Response to Industrial America* (1962); W. T. K. Nugent, *The Tolerant Populists* (1963).] Despite an intemperate style that detracts from the argument, Pollack's work is noteworthy for calling attention to Hofstadter's tendency to subordinate the Populists' real grievances. For Hofstadter does seem to contend that the Popu-

lists were primarily fighting only phantoms, and that few of their proposals could have made any substantial difference either for their "real" troubles or for the course of capitalistic industrialism. When one has finished with all the psychocentric and sociological explanations for the Populist uprising, it may be necessary to re-emphasize that the legal lynching of innocent men (as in the Haymarket affair), the contrived successful prosecutions of labor leaders (e.g., Debs), the blatant unpunished crimes of financiers, food processors, mine owners, and landlords, the judicial legerdemain that negated the antitrust laws and the income tax, the Homestead Strike, the stock manipulations, the Baers and the Pullmans, the rigged prices, and the ballot stuffing were all part of reality just as much as the international wheat market, the price and wage systems, and the financial innovations demanded by large-scale business operations in an urban, industrial economy. If the Populists and their allies sometimes used hyperbolic logic or extremist rhetoric, it is only fair to note that their enemies surely excelled in the practice with hardly less self-righteousness though much less reason.

In the article that follows, C. Vann Woodward (Professor of History at Yale University) analyzes the nature of the liberal intellectuals' disenchantment with the Populists. The article has been reprinted in essentially the same form in Woodward's own *The Burden of Southern History* (1960) in which he makes one substantial change. In the version that appears here he ascribes the intellectuals' disenchantment to the "shock of the encounter with McCarthyism"; in the later version he notes manifestations of the disenchantment in the earlier 'forties.

The Populist Heritage and the Intellectual

C. VANN WOODWARD

During the long era of the New Deal one had little difficulty living in comparative congeniality with the Populist heritage. The two periods had much in common, and it was easy to exaggerate their similarities and natural to seek antecedents and analogies in the earlier era. Because of the common setting of severe depression and economic dislocation, Populism seemed even closer to the New Deal than did Progressivism, which had a setting of prosperity. Common to both Populists and New Dealers was an antagonism to the values of the dominant leaders of the business community bordering

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on alienation. They shared a sense of urgency and an edge of desperation about the demand for reform. And in both, so far as the South and West were concerned, agricultural problems were the most desperate, and agrarian reforms occupied the center of attention. It seemed entirely fitting that Hugo Black of Alabama and Harry Truman of Missouri — politicians whose political style and heritage were strongly Populistic — should lead New Deal reform battles. From many points of view the New Deal was neo-Populism.

The neo-Populism of the present bred a Populistic view of the past. American historiography of the 1930's and 1940's reflects a strong persuasion of this sort. The most popular college textbook in American history was written by a Midwesterner who was friendly to Populism and was himself the foremost historian of the movement. The leading competitor among textbooks shared many of the Populist leanings, even though one of its authors was a Harvard patrician and the other a Columbia urbanite. A remarkably heterogeneous assortment struck up congenial ties in the neo-Populist coalition. Small-town Southerners and big-city Northerners, Texas mavericks and Hudson River aristocrats, Chapel Hill liberals and Nashville agrarians were all able to discover some sort of identity in the heritage. The South rediscovered ties with the West, the farmer with labor. The New York-Virginia axis was revived. Jacksonians were found to have urban affiliations and origins. Not to be outdone, the Communists staked out claims to selected Populist heroes.

Many intellectuals made themselves at home in the neo-Populist coalition and embraced the Populist heritage. They had prepared the way for the affiliation in the twenties when they broke with the genteel tradition, adopted the mucker pose, and decided that conventional politics and the two major parties were the province of the boobocracy and that professional politicians were clowns or hypocrites. In the thirties intellectuals made naïve identification with farmers and workers and supported their spokesmen with enthusiasm. The Populist affinity outlasted the New Deal, survived the war, and perhaps found its fullest expression in the spirit of indulgent affection with which intellectuals often supported Harry Truman and his administration.

Hardly had Truman left the White House, however, when the Populist identification fell into disgrace and intellectuals began to repudiate the heritage. "Populist" suddenly became a term of opprobrium, in some circles a pejorative epithet. This resulted from no transfer of affection to Truman's successor, for there was very little of that among intellectuals. It resulted instead from the shock of the encounter with McCarthyism. Liberals and intellectuals bore the brunt of the degrading McCarthyite assault upon

standards of decency. They were rightly alarmed and felt themselves betrayed. Something had gone badly wrong. They were the victims of a perversion of the democracy they cherished, a seamy and sinister side of democracy to which they now guiltily realized they had all along tended to turn a blind or indulgent eye. Stung by consciousness of their own negligence or naïveté, they reacted with a healthy impulse to make up for lost time and to confront their problem boldly with all the critical resources at their command. The consequence has been a formidable and often valuable corpus of social criticism.

Not one of the critics, not even the most conservative, is prepared to repudiate democracy. There is general agreement that the fault lay in some abuse or perversion of democracy, and was not inherent in democracy itself. All the critics are aware that these abuses and perversions had historic antecedents and had appeared in various guises and with disturbing frequency in national history. These unhappy tendencies are variously described as "mobism," "direct democracy," or "plebiscitarianism," but there is a surprising and apparently spontaneous consensus of preference for "Populism." Although the word is usually capitalized, most of the critics do not limit its reference to the political party that gave currency to the term. While there is general agreement that the essential characteristics designated by the term are best illustrated by an agrarian movement in the last decade of the nineteenth century, some of the critics take the liberty of applying it to movements as early as the Jacksonians, or earlier, and to twentieth-century phenomena as well.

The reasons for this convergence from several angles upon "Populism" as the appropriate designation for an abhorred abuse are not all clear. A few, however, suggest themselves. Populism is generally thought of as an entirely Western affair, Wisconsin as a seedbed of the movement, and Old Bob La Follette as a foremost exponent. None of these assumptions is historically warranted, but it is true that Senator McCarthy came from Wisconsin, that much of his support came from the Middle West, and that there are some similarities between the two movements. The impression of similarity has been enhanced by the historical echo of their own alarm that modern intellectuals have caught in the rather hysterical fright with which Eastern conservatives reacted to Populism in the nineties.

This essay is not concerned with the validity of recent analysis of the "radical right" and its fascistic manifestations in America. It is concerned only with the tendency to identify Populism with these movements and with the implied rejection of the Populist tradition. It is admittedly very difficult, without risk of misrepresentation and injustice, to generalize about the way in which numerous critics have employed the Populist identifica-

tion. They differ widely in the meaning they attribute to the term and the importance they attach to the identification. Among the critics are sociologists, political scientists, poets and journalists, as well as historians, and there is naturally a diversity in the degree of historical awareness and competence they command. Among points of view represented are the New Conservative, the New Liberal, the liberal-progressive, the Jewish, the Anglophile, and the urban, with some overlapping. There are no conscious spokesmen of the West or the South, but some are more-or-less conscious representatives of the urban East. Every effort will be made not to attribute to one the views of another.*

Certain concessions are due at the outset. Any fair-minded historian will acknowledge the validity of some of the points scored by the new critics against the Populist tradition and its defenses. It is undoubtedly true that liberal intellectuals have in the past constructed a flattering image of Populism. They have permitted their sympathy with oppressed groups to blind them to the delusions, myths and foibles of the people with whom they sympathized. Sharing certain political and economic doctrines and certain indignations with the Populists, they have attributed to them other values, tastes and principles that the Populists did not actually profess. It was understandably distasteful to dwell upon the irrational or retrograde traits of people who deserved one's sympathy and shared some of one's views. For undertaking this neglected and distasteful task in the spirit of civility and forbearance which, for example, Richard Hofstadter has shown, some of the new critics deserve much credit. All of them concede some measure of value in the Populist heritage, although none so handsomely as Hofstadter, who assumes that Populism and Progressivism are strongly enough established in our tradition to withstand criticism. Others are prone to make their concessions more perfunctory and to hasten on with the job of heaping upon Populism, as upon a historical scapegoat, all the ills to which democracy is heir.

The danger is that under the concentrated impact of the new criticism the risk is incurred not only of blurring a historical image but of swapping

* Daniel Bell (ed.), *The New American Right* (Criterion, 1955), especially essays by Richard Hofstadter, Peter Viereck, Talcott Parsons and Seymour Martin Lipset; Edward A. Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy* (Free Press, 1956) and "The Intellectuals and the Powers: Some Perspectives for Comparative Analysis," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* I (October, 1958); Peter Viereck, *The Unadjusted Man* (Beacon, 1956); Oscar Handlin, *Race and Nationality in American Life* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1957), and "American Views of the Jews at the Opening of the Twentieth Century," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 40 (June, 1951); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (Knopf, 1955); Victor C. Ferkiss, "Ezra Pound and American Fascism," *Journal of Politics*, XVII (1955); Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization* (Simon & Schuster, 1958).

an old stereotype for a new one. The old one sometimes approached the formulation that Populism is the root of all good in democracy, while the new one sometimes suggests that Populism is the root of all evil. Uncritical repetition and occasional exaggeration of the strictures of some of the critics threaten to result in establishing a new maxim in American political thought: *Radix malorum est Populismus*.

Few of the critics engaged in the reassessment of Populism and the analysis of the New American Right would perhaps go quite so far as Peter Viereck, when he writes, "Beneath the sane economic demands of the Populists of 1880-1900 seethed a mania of xenophobia, Jew-baiting, intellectual-baiting, and thought-controlling lynch-spirit." Yet this far from exhausts the list of unhappy or repulsive aberrations of the American spirit that have been attributed to Populism. Other aberrations are not pictured as a "seething mania" by any one critic, but by one or another the Populists are charged with some degree of responsibility for Anglophobia, Negrophobia, isolationism, imperialism, jingoism, paranoidal conspiracy-hunting, anti-Constitutionalism, anti-intellectualism, and the assault upon the right of privacy, among others. The Populist virus is seen as no respecter of the barriers of time or nationality. According to Edward A. Shils, "populism has many faces. Nazi dictatorship had markedly populist features. . . . Bolshevism has a strand of populism in it too. . . ." And there was among fellow travelers a "populistic predisposition to Stalinism." On the domestic scene the strand of populist tradition "is so powerful that it influences reactionaries like McCarthy and left-wing radicals and great upperclass personalities like Franklin Roosevelt." And according to Viereck, populist attitudes once "underlay Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety" and later "our neo-Populist Committee on un-American Activities."

Among certain of the critics there is no hesitancy in finding a direct continuity between the nineteenth-century Populists and twentieth-century American fascism and McCarthyism. Victor C. Ferkiss states flatly that "American fascism has its roots in American populism. It pursued the same ends and even used many of the same slogans. Both despaired of achieving a just society under the joined banners of liberalism and capitalism." His assertion supports Viereck's suggestion that "Since the same impulses and resentments inspire the old Populism and the new nationalist right, let us adopt 'neo-Populism' as the proper term for the latter group." Talcott Parsons believes that "The elements of continuity between Western agrarian populism and McCarthyism are not by any means purely fortuitous," and Edward Shils thinks the two are connected by "a straight line." It remained for Viereck to fill in the gap: "The missing link between the Populism of 1880-1900 and the neo-Populism of today—the missing link between

Ignatius Donnelly and the McCarthy movement — was Father Charles Coughlin."

There is a strong tendency among the critics not only to identify Populism and the New Radical Right, but to identify both with certain regions, the West and South, and particularly the Middle West. "The areas which produced the populism of the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century have continued to produce them," writes Shils. Viereck puts it somewhat more colorfully: "The Bible-belt of Fundamentalism in religion mostly overlapped with the farm-belt of the Populist, Greenback, and other free-silver parties in politics. Both belts were anti-intellectual, anti-aristocratic, anti-capitalist." Talcott Parsons and Ferkiss likewise stress the regional identity of Populist-Radical Right ideology, and Viereck supplies an interesting illustration: "Out of the western Populist movement came such apostles of thought-control and racist bigotry as Tom Watson. . . ."

If so many undesirable traits are conveniently concentrated along geographical lines, it might serve a useful purpose to straighten out the political geography of Populism a bit. In the first place, as Hofstadter and other historians of the movement have noted, Populism had negligible appeal in the Middle Western states, and so did the quasi-Populism of William Jennings Bryan. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and states east of them went down the line for McKinley, Hanna, gold and the Old Conservatism (and so did Old Bob La Follette). Only in the plains states of the Dakotas, Nebraska and Kansas were there strong Populist leanings, and only they and the mountain states went for Bryan in 1896. At the crest of the Populist wave in 1894 only Nebraska polled a Populist vote comparable in strength to that run up in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina.

For the dubious distinction of being the leading Populist section, the South is in fact a strong contender; and if the test is merely quasi-Populism, the pre-eminence of the former Confederacy is unchallengeable. It was easily the most solidly Bryan section of the country, and its dogged loyalty far outlasted that of the Nebraskan's native state. But a more important test was third-party Populism, the genuine article. The remarkable strength the Populists manifested in the Lower South was gained against far more formidable obstacles than any ever encountered in the West. For there they daily faced the implacable dogmas of racism, white solidarity, white supremacy and the bloody shirt. There was indeed plenty of "thought control and racist bigotry and lynch-spirit," but the Populists were far more often the victims than the perpetrators. They had to contend regularly with foreclosure of mortgages, discharge from jobs, eviction as tenants, exclusion from church, withholding of credit, boycott, social ostracism and the endlessly

reiterated charge of racial disloyalty and sectional disloyalty. Suspicion of loyalty was in fact *the* major psychological problem of the Southern Populists, as much so perhaps as the problem of loyalty faced by radicals of today. They contended also against cynical use of fraud comparable with any used against Reconstruction, methods that included stuffed ballot boxes, packed courts, stacked registration and election boards, and open bribery. They saw election after election stolen from them and heard their opponents boast of the theft. They were victims of mobs and lynchers. Some fifteen Negroes and several white men were killed in the Georgia Populist campaign of 1892, and it was rare that a major election in the Lower South came off without casualties.

Having waged their revolt at such great cost, the Southern Populists were far less willing to compromise their principles than were their Western brethren. It was the Western Populists who planned and led the movement to sell out the party to the silverites, and the Southern Populists who fought and resisted the drift to quasi-Populism. The Southerners were consistently more radical, more insistent upon their economic reforms, and more stubbornly unwilling to lose their party identity in the watered-down populism of Bryan than were Western Populists.

There is some lack of understanding about *who* the Southern Populists were for and against, as well as *what* they were for and against. Edward Shils writes that the "economic and political feebleness and pretensions to breeding and culture" of the "older aristocratic ruling class" in the South provided "a fertile ground for populist denunciation of the upper classes." Actually the Southern Populists directed their rebellion against the newer ruling class, the industrialists and businessmen of the New South instead of the old planters. A few of the quasi-Populists like Ben Tillman did divert resentment to aristocrats like Wade Hampton. But the South was still a more deferential society than the rest of the country, and the Populists were as ready as the railroads and insurance companies to borrow the prestige and name of a great family. The names of the Populist officials in Virginia sounded like a roll call of colonial assemblies or Revolutionary founding fathers: Page, Cocke, Harrison, Beverley, Ruffin. There were none more aristocratic in the Old Dominion. General Robert E. Lee, after the surrender at Appomattox, retired to the ancestral home of Edmund Randolph Cocke after his labors. His host was later Populist candidate for governor of the state. As the editor of their leading paper, the allegedly Anglophobic Populists of Virginia chose Charles H. Pierson, an ordained Anglican priest, English by birth, Cambridge graduate and theological student of Oxford. To be sure, the Populist leaders of Virginia were not typical of the movement in the South. But neither were Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and John

Taylor typical of *their* movement in the South: there were never enough aristocrats to go around. Some states had to make do with cruder customers as leaders in both Jeffersonian and Populist movements, and in the states to the west there doubtless was less habitual dependence on aristocrats even if they had been more readily available.

In their analysis of the radical right of modern America, the new critics have made use of the concept of "status resentment" as the political motivation of their subjects. They distinguish between "class politics," which has to do with the correction of economic deprivations, and "status politics," which has no definite solutions and no clear-cut legislative program but responds to irrational appeals and vents aggression and resentment for status insecurity upon scapegoats — usually ethnic minorities. Seymour Martin Lipset, who appears at times to include Populism in the category, has outlined the conditions typical of periods when status politics become ascendant. These are, he writes, "periods of prosperity, especially when full employment is accompanied by inflation, and when many individuals are able to improve their economic position." But the conditions under which Populism rose were exactly the opposite: severe depression, critical unemployment and crippling currency contraction, when few were able to improve their economic position — and certainly not farmers in cash-crop staple agriculture.

The Populists may have been bitten by status anxieties, but if so they were certainly not bred of upward social mobility, and probably few by downward mobility either — for the simple reason that there was not much further downward for most Populists to go, and had not been for some time. Populism was hardly "status politics," and I should hesitate to call it "class politics." It was more nearly "interest politics," and more specifically "agricultural interest politics." Whatever concern the farmers might have had for their status was overwhelmed by desperate and immediate economic anxieties. Not only their anxieties but their proposed solutions and remedies were economic. While their legislative program may have been often naïve and inadequate, it was almost obsessively economic and, as political platforms go, little more irrational than the run of the mill.

Yet one of the most serious charges leveled against the Populists in the reassessment by the new critics is an addiction to just the sort of irrational obsession that is typical of status politics. This is the charge of anti-Semitism. It has been documented most fully by Richard Hofstadter and Oscar Handlin and advanced less critically by others. The prejudice is attributed to characteristic Populist traits — rural provinciality, and ominous credulity and an obsessive fascination with conspiracy. Baffled by the complexities of monetary and banking problems, Populist ideologues simplified them into

a rural melodrama with Jewish international bankers as the principal villains. Numerous writings of Western Populists are cited that illustrate the tendency to use Jewish financiers and their race as scapegoats for agrarian resentment. Hofstadter points out that Populist anti-Semitism was entirely verbal and rhetorical and cautions that it can easily be misconstrued and exaggerated. Nevertheless, he is of the opinion "that the Greenback-Populist tradition activated most of what we have of modern popular anti-Semitism in the United States."

In the voluminous literature of the nineties on currency and monetary problems — problems that were much more stressed by silverites and quasi-Populists than by radical Populists — three symbols were repetitively used for the plutocratic adversary. One was institutional, Wall Street; and two were ethnic, the British and Jewish bankers. Wall Street was by far the most popular and has remained so ever since among politicians of agrarian and Populistic tradition. Populist agitators used the ethnic symbols more or less indiscriminately, British along with Jewish, although some of them bore down with peculiar viciousness on the Semitic symbol. As the new critics have pointed out, certain Eastern intellectuals of the patrician sort, such as Henry and Brooks Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge, shared the Populist suspicion and disdain of the plutocracy and likewise shared their rhetorical anti-Semitism. John Higham has called attention to a third anti-Semitic group of the nineties, the poorer classes in urban centers. Their prejudice cannot be described as merely verbal and rhetorical. Populists were not responsible for a protest signed by fourteen Jewish societies in 1899 that "No Jew can go on the street without exposing himself to the danger of being pitilessly beaten." That was in Brooklyn. And the mob of 1902 that injured some two hundred people, mostly Jewish, went into action in Lower East Side New York.

Populist anti-Semitism is not to be excused on the ground that it was verbal, nor dismissed because the prejudice received more violent expression in urban quarters. But all would admit that the charge of anti-Semitism has taken on an infinitely more ominous and hideous significance since the Nazi genocide furnaces that it ever had before, at least in Anglo-American society. The Populists' use of the Shylock symbol was not wholly innocent, but they used it as a folk stereotype, and little had happened in the Anglo-Saxon community between the time of Shakespeare and that of the Populists that burdened the latter with additional guilt in repeating the stereotype.

The South, again, was a special instance. Much had happened there to enhance the guilt of racist propaganda and to exacerbate racism. But anti-Semitism was not the trouble, and to stress it in connection with the South

of the nineties would be comparable to stressing anti-Negro feeling in the Arab states of the Middle East today. Racism there was, in alarming quantity, but it was directed against another race and it was not merely rhetorical. The Negro suffered far more discrimination and violence than the Jew did in that era or later. Moreover, there was little in the Southern tradition to restrain the political exploitation of anti-Negro prejudice and much more to encourage its use than there was in the American tradition with respect to anti-Semitism. Racism was exploited in the South with fantastic refinements and revolting excesses in the Populist period. Modern students of the dynamics of race prejudice, such as Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz, find similarities between anti-Negro feelings and anti-Semitism and in the psychological traits of those to whom both appeal. First in the list of those traits under both anti-Negro attitudes and anti-Semitism is "the feeling of deprivation," and another lower in the list but common to both is "economic apprehensions." The Southern Populists would seem to have constituted the perfect market for Negrophobia.

But perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the whole Populist movement was the resistance its leaders in the South put up against racism and racist propaganda and the determined effort they made against incredible odds to win back political rights for the Negroes, to defend those rights against brutal aggression, and to create among their normally anti-Negro following, even temporarily, a spirit of tolerance in which the two races of the South could work together in one party for the achievement of common ends. These efforts included not only the defense of the Negro's right to vote, but also his right to hold office, serve on juries, receive justice in the courts and defense against lynchers. The Populists failed, and some of them turned bitterly against the Negro as the cause of their failure. But in the efforts they made for racial justice and political rights they went further toward extending the Negro political fellowship, recognition and equality than any native white political movement has ever gone before or since in the South. This record is of greater historical significance and deserves more emphasis and attention than any anti-Semitic tendencies the movement manifested in that region or any other. If resistance to racism is the test of acceptability for a place in the American political heritage, Populism would seem to deserve more indulgence at the hands of its critics than it has recently enjoyed.

Two other aspects of the identification between the old Populism and the new radical right require critical modification. Talcott Parsons, Max Lerner and Victor Ferkiss, among others, find that the old regional strongholds of Populism tended to become the strongholds of isolationism in the period between the two world wars and believe there is more than a fortuitous connection between a regional proneness to Populism and isolationism. These

and other critics believe also that they discern a logical connection between a regional addiction to Populism in the old days and to McCarthyism in recent times.

In both of these hypotheses the critics have neglected to take into account the experience of the South and mistakenly assumed a strong Populist heritage in the Middle West. One of the strongest centers of Populism, if not the strongest, the South in the foreign policy crisis before the Second World War was the least isolationist and the most internationalist and interventionist part of the country. And after the war, according to Nathan Glazer and Seymour Lipset, who base their statement on opinion poll studies, "the South was the most anti-McCarthy section of the country." It is perfectly possible that in rejecting isolationism and McCarthyism the South was "right" for the "wrong" reasons, traditional and historical reasons. V. O. Key has suggested that among the reasons for its position on foreign policy were centuries of dependence on world trade, the absence of any concentration of Irish or Germanic population, and the predominantly British origin of the white population. Any adequate explanation of the South's rejection of McCarthy would be complex, but part of it might be the region's peculiarly rich historical experience with its own assortment of demagogues — Populistic and other varieties — and the consequent acquirement of some degree of sophistication and some minimal standards of decency in the arts of demagoguery. No one has attempted to explain the South's anti-isolationism and anti-McCarthyism by reference to its Populist heritage — and certainly no such explanation is advanced here.

To do justice to the new critique of Populism it should be acknowledged that much of its bill of indictment is justified. It is true that the Populists were a provincial lot and that much of their thinking was provincial. It is true that they took refuge in the agrarian myth, that they denied the commercial character of agricultural enterprise and sometimes dreamed of a Golden Age. In their economic thought they overemphasized the importance of money and oversimplified the nature of their problems by claiming a harmony of interest between farmer and labor, by dividing the world into "producers" and "nonproducers," by reducing all conflict to "just two sides," and by thinking that too many ills and too many remedies of the world were purely legislative. Undoubtedly many of them were fascinated with the notion of conspiracy and advanced conspiratorial theories of history, and some of them were given to apocalyptic premonitions of direful portent.

To place these characteristics in perspective, however, one should inquire how many of them are peculiar to the Populists and how many are shared by the classes or groups or regions or by the period to which the Populists

belong. The great majority of Populists were provincial, ill-educated and rural, but so were the great majority of Americans in the nineties, Republicans and Democrats as well. They were heirs to all the superstition, folklore and prejudice that is the heritage of the ill-informed. The Populists utilized and institutionalized some of this, but so did their opponents. There were a good many conspiratorial theories and economic nostrums and oversimplifications adrift in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the Populists had no monopoly of them. They did overemphasize the importance of money, but scarcely more so than did their opponents, the Gold Bugs. The preoccupation with monetary reforms and remedies was a characteristic of the period rather than a peculiarity of the Populists. The genuine Populist, moreover, was more concerned with the "primacy of credit" than with the "primacy of money," and his insistence that the federal government was the only agency powerful enough to provide a solution for the agricultural credit problem proved to be sound. And so did his contention that the banking system was stacked against his interest and that reform in this field was overdue.

The Populist doctrine of a harmony of interest between farmer and labor, between workers and small businessmen, and the alignment of these "producers" against the parasitic "nonproducers," is not without precedent in our political history. Any party that aspires to gain power in America must strive for a coalition of conflicting interest groups. The Populist effort was no more irrational in this respect than was the Whig coalition and many others, including the New Deal coalition.

The political crisis of the nineties evoked hysterical responses and apocalyptic delusions in more than one quarter. The excesses of the leaders of a protest movement of provincial, unlettered and angry farmers are actually more excusable and understandable than the rather similar responses of the spokesmen of the educated, successful and privileged classes of the urban East. There would seem to be less excuse for hysteria and conspiratorial obsessions among the latter. One thinks of the *Nation* describing the Sherman Silver Purchase Act as a "socialistic contrivance of gigantic proportions," or of Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt declaring in "the greatest soberness" that the Populists were "plotting a social revolution and the subversion of the American Republic" and proposing to make an example of twelve of their leaders by "shooting them dead" against a wall. Or there was Joseph H. Choate before the Supreme Court pronouncing the income tax "the beginnings of socialism and communism" and "the destruction of the Constitution itself." For violence of rhetoric *Harper's Weekly*, the *New York Tribune* and the *Springfield Republican* could hold their own with the wool-hat press in the campaign of 1896. Hysteria was not confined

to mugwump intellectuals with status problems. Mark Hanna told an assembly of his wealthy friends at the Union League Club they were acting like "a lot of scared hens."

Anarchism was almost as much a conspiracy symbol for conservatives as Wall Street was for the Populists, and conservatives responded to any waving of the symbol even more irrationally, for there was less reality in the menace of anarchism for capitalism. John Hay had a vituperative address called "The Platform of Anarchy" that he used in the campaign of 1896. The *Springfield Republican* called Bryan "the exaltation of anarchy"; Dr. Lyman Abbott labeled Bryanites "the anarchists of the Northwest," and Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst was excited about the menace of "anarchism" in the Democratic platform. It was the Populist sympathizer Governor John Peter Altgeld of Illinois who pardoned the three anarchists of Haymarket, victims of conservative hysteria, and partly corrected the gross miscarriage of justice that had resulted in the hanging of four others. The *New York Times* promptly denounced Governor Altgeld as a secret anarchist himself, and Theodore Roosevelt said that Altgeld would conspire to inaugurate "a red government of lawlessness and dishonesty as fantastic and vicious as the Paris Commune." There was more than a touch of conspiratorial ideology in the desperate conservative reaction to the agrarian revolt. An intensive study of the nineties can hardly fail to leave the impression that this decade had rather more than its share of zaniness and crankiness, and that these qualities were manifested in the higher and middling as well as the lower orders of American society.

Venturing beyond the 1890's and speaking of populists with a small *p*, some of the new critics would suggest that popular protest movements of the populist style throughout our history have suffered from a peculiar addiction to scares, scapegoats and conspiratorial notions. It is true that such movements tend to attract the less sophisticated, the people who are likely to succumb to cranks and the appeal of their menaces and conspiratorial obsessions. But before one accepts this as a populist or radical peculiarity, one should recall that the Jacobin Scare of the 1790's was a Federalist crusade and that the populist elements of that era were its victims and not its perpetrators. One should remember also that A. Mitchell Palmer and the super-patriots who staged the Great Red Scare of 1919-1920 were not populist in their outlook. One of the most successful conspiratorial theories of history in American politics was the Great Slave Conspiracy notion advanced by the abolitionists and later incorporated in the Republican Party credo for several decades.

Richard Hofstadter has put his finger on a neglected tendency of some Populists and Progressives as well, the tendency he calls "deconversion

from reform to reaction," the tendency to turn cranky, illiberal and sour. This happened with disturbing frequency among leaders as well as followers of Populism. Perhaps the classic example is the Georgia Populist Tom Watson, twice his party's candidate for President and once for Vice-President. When Watson soured he went the whole way. By no means all of the Populist leaders turned sour, but there are several other valid instances. Even more disturbing is the same tendency to turn sour among the old Populist rank and file, to take off after race phobias, religious hatreds and witch hunts. The reasons for this retrograde tendency among reformers to embrace the forces they have spent years in fighting have not been sufficiently investigated. It may be that in some instances the reform movement appeals to personalities with unstable psychological traits. In the case of the Populists, however, it would seem that a very large part of the explanation lies in embittered frustration — repeated and tormenting frustration of both the leaders and the led.

Whatever the explanation, it cannot be denied that some of the offshoots of Populism are less than lovely to contemplate and rather painful to recall. Misshapen and sometimes hideous, they are caricatures of the Populist ideal, although their kinship with the genuine article is undeniable. No one in his right mind can glory in their memory, and it would at times be a welcome relief to renounce the whole Populist heritage in order to be rid of the repulsive aftermath. Repudiation of the Populist tradition presents the liberal-minded Southerner in particular with a temptation of no inconsiderable appeal, for it would unburden him of a number of embarrassing associations.

In his study of populist traits in American society, Edward Shils has some perceptive observations on the difficult relations between politicians and intellectuals. He adds a rather wistful footnote: "How painful the American situation looked to our intellectuals when they thought of Great Britain. There the cream of the graduates of the two ancient universities entered the civil service by examinations which were delightfully archaic and which had no trace of spoils patronage about them. . . . Politics, radical politics, conducted in a seemly fashion by the learned and reflective was wonderful. It was an ideal condition which was regretfully recognized as impossible to reproduce in the United States." He himself points out many of the reasons why this is possible in Britain, the most dignified member of the parliamentary fraternity: respect for "betters," mutual trust within the ruling classes, deferential attitudes of working class and middle class, the aura of aristocracy and monarchy that still suffuses the institutions of a government no longer aristocratic, the retention of the status and the symbols of hierarchy

despite economic leveling. No wonder that from some points of view, "the British system seemed an intellectual's paradise."

America has it worse — or at least different. The deferential attitude lingers only in the South, and there mainly as a quaint gesture of habit. Respect for "betters" is un-American. Glaring publicity replaces mutual trust as the *modus vivendi* among the political elite. No aura of aristocratic decorum and hierarchal sanctity surrounds our governmental institutions, even the most august of them. Neither Supreme Court nor State Department nor Army is immune from popular assault and the rude hand of suspicion. The sense of institutional identity is weak, and so are institutional loyalties. Avenues between the seats of learning and the seats of power are often blocked by mistrust and mutual embarrassment.

America has no reason to expect that it could bring off a social revolution without a breach of decorum or the public peace, nor that the revolutionary party would eventually be led by a graduate of exclusive Winchester and Oxford. American politics are not ordinarily "conducted in a seemly fashion by the learned and reflective." Such success as we have enjoyed in this respect — the instances of the Sage of Monticello and the aristocrat of Hyde Park come to mind — have to be accounted for by a large element of luck. Close investigation of popular upheavals of protest and reform in the political history of the United States has increasingly revealed of late that they have all had their seamy side and their share of the irrational, the zany and the retrograde. A few of the more successful movements have borrowed historical reputability from the memory of the worthies who led them, but others have not been so fortunate either in their leaders or their historians.

One must expect and even hope that there will be future upheavals to shock the seats of power and privilege and furnish the periodic therapy that seems necessary to the health of our democracy. But one cannot expect them to be any more decorous or seemly or rational than their predecessors. One can reasonably hope, however, that they will not all fall under the sway of the Huey Longs and Father Coughlins who will be ready to take charge. Nor need they if the tradition is maintained which enabled a Henry George to place himself in the vanguard of the antimonopoly movement in his day, which encouraged a Henry Demarest Lloyd to labor valiantly to shape the course of Populism, or which prompted an Upton Sinclair to try to make sense of a rag-tag-and-bob-tail aberration in California.

For the tradition to endure, for the way to remain open, however, the intellectual must not be alienated from the sources of revolt. It was one of the glories of the New Deal that it won the support of the intellectual and one of the tragedies of Populism that it did not. The intellectual must re-

sist the impulse to identify all the irrational and evil forces he detests with such movements because some of them, or the aftermath or epigone of some of them, have proved so utterly repulsive. He will learn all he can from the new criticism about the irrational and illiberal side of Populism and other reform movements, but he cannot afford to repudiate the heritage.

9

THE PROBLEM OF PROGRESS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Perhaps the chief overall problem for American society at the outset of the 20th century was Progress — or more specifically, how Americans might enjoy the fruits of industrial progress without the continued sacrifice of human dignity that so far had characterized economic advance. Prosperity after 1897 subdued the nightmare of pitched labor battles, marching armies of unemployed, and the political heresies of the Populists. Good times were reflected, too, in rising farm prices, balance of payments statistics, the renewed tidal swell of immigration, the launching of giant corporate enterprises, even in the doubling of labor-union membership in the four years that straddled the centenary. As in the past, America's phenomenal success tended to cloak potent discontents, such as had burst into small-scale civil warfare during the 1890's. In the prosperous first year of the new century, Episcopal Bishop William Lawrence of Massachusetts beamed the message that seemed Truth for its time and place: "Material prosperity," he said, "is helping to make the national character sweeter, more joyous, more unselfish, more Christlike."

Although it is clear that prosperity did "sweeten" the long-standing discontents of the nation's underprivileged, it was the sweetening effect upon the dominant classes that had the most lasting significance. Repression gave way to accommodation as the policy of the nation's chief policy makers. A threatened strike by coal miners in 1900, for example, brought pressure from the White House, through Mark Hanna, not upon the labor leaders but on the mine owners to settle the issue with concessions to labor. When the mine owners refused a second accommodation in 1902 and the strike ensued, the President of the United States invoked not the military, as Presidents Hayes, Harrison, and Cleveland had done in similar circumstances, but a mediation that again exacted concessions from the mine owners. [See R. H. Wiebe, "The Anthracite Strike of 1902: A Record of Confusion," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVIII (Sept. 1961).] These events were indicative of a substantial change in policy by those who held power in the country. In the 'nineties, men like Roosevelt and Taft had spoken readily of using Gatling guns to make short work of agitators, but in the prosperous years of the new century they spoke at least as readily of the "dull, purblind folly of the very rich men, their greed and their arrogance," which "tended to produce a very un-

healthy condition of excitement and irritation in the popular mind," and which showed itself "in the great increase in socialistic propaganda." [Roosevelt to Taft, March, 1906.] "The friends of property," Roosevelt declared in 1904, "must realize that the surest way to provoke an explosion of wrong and injustice is to be shortsighted, narrow-minded, greedy and arrogant." [To P. Knox, Nov. 10, 1904.]

The fear of socialism, violence, and possibly worse lay behind many of the major achievements of the progressive movement. There was some truth, for example, in Lincoln Steffens' accusation of Roosevelt that it was only a railroad law that he wanted, one that would mollify the public without substantially altering the power of railroad management. T. R. candidly acknowledged precisely that tactic on the issue of tariff reform; when he negotiated a reciprocity treaty with Newfoundland in 1904 (his one important concession to the tariff reformers), he wrote to intimates that he had acted only because there was "a sentiment which demands a [tariff] revision" that no longer could be ignored, and not because there was any "material need."

Roosevelt sought to discriminate between "moral issues" (which he believed were the principal issues of his time) and matters of expediency. Tariff reform he placed in the second category because he could not see that one could determine the measure of justice or injustice done when tariff favors were bestowed on or taken away from some particular economic interest; it was merely a question of reshuffling advantages among competing business groups, with the best favors going to those who wielded the greatest power. Similarly, he could understand the "immorality" of extortionate railroad rates, but the more complex issues of freight classification or less-than-carload and long and short haul rate differentials he tended to dismiss simply as matters of which interest had the power to make the best deal in a competitive situation. As J. M. Blum has noted (while making a different point), T. R. understood that the maximum rate provision of the Hepburn Act (1906) would afford little remedy for discrimination between commodities or between localities, "but such discrimination seemed to him relatively impersonal. He cared less about freight classification and long and short haul differentials because he could not readily associate those matters with a doer of evil and a victim." [*The Republican Roosevelt* (1954) p. 90.]

Roosevelt's aversion for such problems did not, of course, remove them. Tariff reform remained one of the two leading issues of the day, while the agitation for railroad reform focused precisely on the issue of discriminations that T. R. considered to have little "moral meaning." Actually, the most significant political developments of the era took place in just that sector of human conflict where such matters as "evil," "justice," and "morality" have no appropriate application — or at least where their definition tends to be a direct function of self-interest. (Possibly this is true for any era. See Link, pp. 347ff., below.) In some measure, Roosevelt noticed this contradiction himself. "Curiously enough," he wrote to Steffens in 1908, "events have forced me

to make my chief fights in public life against privilege, [though] I know from actual experience . . . that what is needed is the *fundamental fight for morality*." [T. R.'s emphasis.] Roosevelt was in many ways among the most sophisticated of the progressives. Yet he seems to have resisted stubbornly the necessity for grappling with a world of politics in which the principal stakes were, not whether good men or bad men were to prevail, but who was to get how much of what the society had to offer.

The contending interests in America were indeed competing for *privilege* — in the legal sense of what forms of social or commercial behavior were to be privileged or legitimated even though they might cause injury to others. (In this respect, Roosevelt's statement to Stefens said more than he knew; for Roosevelt used the word "privilege" essentially in the opprobrious sense that was common in his day.) A grocer, for example, who opens a store across the street from another grocer does injury to the latter's business and consequently to his standard of living. But the society *privileges* such injury in the interest of free competition. More to the point: a labor union and its weapon, the strike, do injury to the profit margins of an employer, to the free flow of commerce, and even to the liberties of anti-union workers, but society may privilege it (it was a major issue in the progressive era) in the interest of balancing corporate power and of bringing a form of order to labor-management relations. Other issues of the same nature included these: Should the society privilege railroad rate differentials that impair the industrial potentialities of a region in the interest of unencumbered private enterprise and of the previously established claims of businessmen elsewhere? Should commercial pools and monopolies be excluded from the privileges society grants to other competing business forms? Or, as it was most often put in the progressive era: Should certain business consolidations be exempted from the proscriptions against combinations in restraint of trade in the interest of industrial efficiency and the enhancement of our international trade?

Other equally knotty problems of a somewhat different order also beset the policy makers of the progressive era. In the interest of decentralized political power, should American society permit the states and their local interests to decide policy for the exploitation of natural resources; or should the federal government set such policy in the interest of efficiency and the total national need? [See Bates, pp. 267ff., below.] Should society restrict the flow of immigration in the interest of greater social order; or would such restriction too seriously impair our industrial vitality? Should our inefficient agricultural system be allowed to crumble from its own deficiencies; or should part of the social surplus be used to maintain the family farm as a major source of social stability?

These were crucial questions of social policy. Yet few progressives were equipped intellectually to grapple with them because of a fundamental premise most of them seemed to share with Roosevelt: that the

most important social problems could be solved by integrity, ability, and simple morality. [Cf. D. W. Noble, "The Paradox of Progressive Thought," *American Quarterly*, V (Fall 1953).] It was perhaps natural for progressives to place such emphasis upon the fight for morality, since, as we noted at the start, the progressive movement in general was conceived in the interest of ending the brutality to human decencies and conventional values that industrialism seemed to have inflicted. The conventions of decency, right, and justice were simply assumed. It was, indeed, primarily through their constant appeal for commonplace virtues in social affairs that the progressives achieved their most durable success: the blunting of the sharper edges of self-interest among the major forces in American life. But we cannot begin to understand the politics of the era if we assume that the appeal for common virtues dominated *political developments*. Roosevelt's experience gives point to this fact. Such an assumption, moreover, would impel us to regard all those who did not or would not join in the fight for reform legislation as ignorant, obstructionist, venal, or malicious. The problems noted above were resolved—insofar as they *were* resolved at all—primarily by the interplay of political power, modified only slightly by the influence of progressive rhetoric.

The following article is intended to illustrate the complexity of the problem. It deals with a state that set itself against the reforms demanded by the nation's progressives even though it had pioneered in just such reforms itself.

A Paradox of Progressivism: Massachusetts on the Eve of Insurgency

RICHARD M. ABRAMS

What characterizes an era and often gives it its popular historical name is the effort which the contemporary society makes to solve the dominant problem of the era. Not all elements of the society, of course, may participate in the effort. In the years after the turn of the twentieth century, American society took long strides toward strengthening republican institutions, creating safeguards against waste and corruption, establishing greater control over corporations and public utilities, and promoting the general welfare through social legislation. Contemporaries and historians named the

movement to achieve these objectives "Progressive." Because Massachusetts did not participate significantly in the Progressive Movement, contemporaries tended to view the state as stolid and backward, and historians have looked elsewhere for Progressive achievements.

In an early account of the period, for example, Harold U. Faulkner chose Wisconsin as "the most conspicuous example" of the states which established controls over public utilities and promoted the general welfare through social legislation. Matthew Josephson agreed that "For other states, Wisconsin became a sort of experimental social laboratory where new legislation was carefully tested and perfected," adding that "The 'Wisconsin Idea' . . . was a product of the intensely democratic Middle West farmers."¹ In *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, the most recent scholarly survey of the era, George E. Mowry also attributed the pioneering rôle to Wisconsin. Under the leadership of Robert M. La Follette, he asserted, "Wisconsin had gone further than any other state along the path toward a social democracy." For Massachusetts, on the other hand, Professor Mowry, like other historians, reserved only casual citation. "Even in traditionalist New England," he observed "faint" marks of enlightenment late in the era.²

Yet before 1900, with a few exceptions,³ Massachusetts had enjoyed in practice if not in form all the democratic innovations which Progressives emphasized after 1900. It had, in addition, the most effective corporation laws in the nation; and it led the country in labor legislation. It owed most of these achievements, however, not to any reform *movement*, but rather to the character of its tradition, rooted in the Puritan-colonial experience. For that reason it would be confusing to call Massachusetts a "Progressive" state, as the word is conventionally used. Nevertheless, in most matters identified with Progressivism after 1900, Massachusetts had earlier taken an advanced position.

I

As a model of republican government, Massachusetts had long attracted the attention of civic reformers and students of politics. Even in the "Gilded

¹ Harold U. Faulkner, *The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914* (New York, 1931), p. 124; Matthew Josephson, *The President Makers* (New York, 1940), pp. 217-218. See also Robert S. Maxwell, *La Follette and the Rise of the Progressives in Wisconsin* (Madison, 1956), esp. p. 195.

² George E. Mowry, *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 1958), pp. 294, 79 (my emphasis).

³ Among the outstanding Progressive objectives which Massachusetts still lacked were direct election of United States Senators, woman suffrage, and the direct primary. It initiated a primary system in 1902.

Age," that incisive critic of American institutions, Lord Bryce, could write:

The best [state legislatures] seem to be those of the New England states, particularly Massachusetts, where the venerable traditions surrounding an ancient commonwealth do something to sustain the dignity of the body and induce good men to enter it. The legislature, called the General Court, is, according to the best authorities, substantially pure and does its work well.⁴

A generation later, when Wisconsin was capturing the attention of the nation's reformers with its program of political democracy, social justice and regulation, Professor Paul S. Reinsch of the University of Wisconsin observed that "the General Court of Massachusetts is in all respects nearest the people, and most responsive of any American legislature to intelligent public opinion."⁵

While reformers in other states during the Populist and Progressive eras fought for closer electoral checks on representatives, state officials in Massachusetts had had to face the electorate annually since colonial times. To safeguard that electorate, Massachusetts became in 1888 the first state to require the Australian ballot. Reformers elsewhere had to fight for the initiative and referendum to secure greater legislative response to the popular will. But in the Bay State the legislature could always attach a referendum provision to any bill applying to local affairs, and failure to do so with highly controversial bills could lead to a veto. All legislative measures were introduced as "petitions," and it was not unusual for a private citizen to draft such a petition, or for the ultimate bill to bear the name of that citizen.⁶ Even beyond the right of personal petition in the General Court, the traditional town meeting provided a highly effective form of initiative; although the law did not compel legislators to introduce or vote for measures petitioned at such meetings, they ran the risk of defeat at the annual election if they did not.

In the legislature, bills were subject to open and formal hearings which members of the public not only could attend but in which they also could actively participate.⁷ Although in most states public hearings did not usually

⁴ James Bryce, *American Commonwealth* (London and New York, 1883), I, 515.

⁵ Paul S. Reinsch, *American Legislatures and Legislative Methods* (New York, 1907), p. 175; cf. H. S. Dodds, "Procedure in State Legislatures," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Supplement I (1917), p. 50; Walter F. Dodd, *State Government* (New York, 1928), p. 188.

⁶ Thomas J. Wood, "Distinctive Legislative Practices of the Massachusetts General Court," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1947. See also John W. Plaisted, *Legislative Procedure in the General Court of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1948), pp. 13-15, and Reinsch, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁷ Such men as Louis D. Brandeis and Joseph B. Eastman began their long public careers early in the Progressive Era by appearing as representatives of the public at such hearings.

influence legislation (perhaps because in most states, unlike Massachusetts, the legislature was located away from the business and population centers), Paul Reinsch noted in 1907 that, in Massachusetts alone, committee hearings were "a very important part of legislative action."⁸ Reformers elsewhere had to contend with small minorities, often entrenched in key committee positions, who bottled up reform measures. But the standing rules of the General Court required committees to report all measures referred to them, and they usually did report well in advance of the close of the legislative session. The constitutions of many states restricted the legislatures to a certain number of months during the year, for economy reasons, and because conservative interests feared "too much" legislation. The Massachusetts legislature, however, was authorized to remain in session throughout the year.

In sum, Massachusetts possessed almost all the institutional "guarantees" for legislative responsibility in advance of the movements launched to achieve them.

II

Massachusetts enjoyed more significant benefits than the political practices which Progressives, circa 1900, began to demand elsewhere in the country. In an important sense, one may view Progressivism as a response to the collectivization of American life, and in particular to the disproportionate and insidious influence which public utilities and business corporations exerted upon public policy. In this respect, perhaps the most striking of Massachusetts' achievements was its effective regulation of corporations, particularly of railroads and other public services.

Though other states had anticipated Massachusetts in establishing temporary and *ad hoc* commissions, the Massachusetts Railroad Commission of 1869 was the first established for the continuing and general purpose of reconciling conflicts of interest between the railroads and the public.⁹ Under the able and conscientious leadership of Charles Francis Adams, Jr., and fortified by annual salaries of \$4,000 (which awed commissioners elsewhere), the three-man commission won the respect and envy of similar bodies. The duties of the board included investigation of the physical and financial status of all the railroads operating within the state, with the right

⁸ Reinsch, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁹ Each of the other New England states had previously provided for commissions to handle particular problems; e.g., New Hampshire created a commission to enable private railroad companies to assume the form of a public corporation so that they might preempt land for railroad construction by right of eminent domain. See Edward C. Kirkland, *Men, Cities, and Transportation* (Cambridge, 1948), II, 231-237.

to inquire into the records of the companies. On the basis of its investigations, the Commission could make recommendations concerning repairs, safety, junctions, stock issues, and all other matters which might concern the public, including freight and passenger rate levels. These recommendations were to be made to the company, as well as to the public in annual reports. As Adams later observed, "The board of commissioners was set up as a sort of lens by means of which the otherwise scattered rays of public opinion could be concentrated to a focus and brought to bear upon a given point."¹⁰

By acts of 1885 and 1887, the General Court established a Board of Gas and Electric Light Commissioners to regulate companies which supplied power and light to the fast-growing municipalities in the state. Essentially the Board had the same duties as the Railroad Commission. But, in addition, the legislature armed this Board with "summary powers as to rates and service."¹¹ These included the power to investigate complaints, and upon investigation to order a reduction in price or an improvement in service; the power to fix rates upon the application of a service company; the right to prohibit companies from invading cities and towns serviced already by at least one gas and electric company; and the power to demand annual reports from the companies.¹²

On the face of it, the functions of both public service commissions in their original forms appeared to be to act primarily as coordinating agencies for public utilities, to protect them and the public from the effects of wasteful competition and recurrent disputes over service. Especially in the case of the Railroad Commission, the General Court fortified the restrictive functions with little more than the power to make recommendations and to give publicity to company affairs. Since, by the 1890's, insurgents in many western and southern states sought, not conciliatory and advisory instruments to eliminate the causes of disruptive conflicts, but rather weapons against the power of overbearing corporations, they regarded the Massachusetts body as the model illustration of a "weak commission."

It would be a mistake, however, to underestimate the effectiveness of investigatory and publicity functions in a state which was "an abode of restless reformers,"¹³ and which had a long tradition of government intervention in the economic affairs of its citizens.¹⁴ Even more important, the Gen-

¹⁰ Quoted by Kirkland, *op. cit.*, II, 239.

¹¹ Irston R. Barnes, *Public Utility Control in Massachusetts* (New Haven and London, 1930), p. 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

¹³ Kirkland, *op. cit.*, II, 244.

¹⁴ See Oscar and Mary Flug Handlin, *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Government in the American Economy, 1774-1861* (New York and London, 1947), *passim*.

eral Court frequently appended additional powers to the commissions. In the case of the railroad board, these included requiring its approval for various technical innovations; giving it authority to review — and sometimes to set — commuter rates, and power to determine the public need for new roads and how much the roads and the localities were to pay toward the elimination of grade crossings. Statutes of 1887 and 1889 required the Railroad Commission to ascertain property valuation before a railroad could increase its capital stock, and before the board authorized a bond issue. After 1894, moreover, railroads and gas and electric utilities had to secure the approval of the commissions for all issues of stocks and bonds, and the terms of every lease, purchase and sale.¹⁵

In fact the powers which the acts of 1893 and 1894, especially, gave to the commissions make it fallacious to call those bodies “weak.” This legislation included the then unprecedented requirement that all stock issues of more than 4 per cent of the total stock of a railroad, gas or electric company be sold at auction, or be sold proportionately to stockholders at a price estimated to be market value by the appropriate commission.¹⁶ The purpose of such legislation was to keep the outstanding securities at a minimum by requiring issues to be sold at the highest possible prices. To the same end, the legislature prohibited stock dividends and capitalization of earnings.¹⁷

During the Progressive Era, some of the sharper critics of the practices of railroad corporations believed that Massachusetts overemphasized regulation of capitalization as compared with regulation of price and service.¹⁸ Yet, as long as it was assumed that a stockholder had a right to earn a “fair return” on his capital, excessive rates followed perforce from excessive dividend demands which were created by the multiplication of stock disproportionate to physical value. Unless the state effectively prevented excessive capitalization, rate control would have been a meaningless gesture. In op-

¹⁵ Mass. Bd. R.R. Commissrs., *26th. Ann. Rpt.* (1895), pp. 13-14, 127-134, 147, 149; *27th Ann. Rpt.* (1896), pp. 141-153, 168, 181; also, William A. Crafts (sec’y., Mass. Bd. R.R. Commissrs.), “The Second Decade of the Massachusetts Railroad Commission,” *Railroad Gazette*, XXV (1893), 551; Kirkland, *op. cit.*, II, 248.

¹⁶ Mass. Bd. R.R. Commissrs., *26th Ann. Rpt.*, pp. 13-14. Also Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 58-59; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Report of the Commission on Commerce and Industry* (1908), p. 60.

¹⁷ “This supervision,” wrote Irston Barnes, “has included all types of securities and has been applied virtually from the beginning of public utility development in Massachusetts.” Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 3, also, pp. 77-78. “The entire course of legislation,” the Gas and Electric Light Commission observed in 1913, “clearly indicates the well-founded conviction that the volume of securities outstanding against any public utility has a potent effect upon rates and quality of service, since prices are made and maintained to meet the expectations of stockholders as to dividends, and service may be seriously impaired by a continued endeavor to meet those expectations.” Bd. Gas & Elec. Light Commissrs., *29th Ann. Rpt.* (1913), p. 12.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Edward Bemis, “Control of the Capitalization of Public Service Corporations in Massachusetts,” *American Economic Association Quarterly*, X (1909), 426.

posing an order to reduce rates, a utility company could always argue that reduced revenues would not permit stockholders to earn a "fair return," and would therefore amount to confiscation. Eventually, most Progressives at least tacitly accepted the principles of the Massachusetts laws.¹⁹ As late as 1908, the *Chicago Tribune*, then moving toward an insurgent position, cited Massachusetts corporation law as a "model which the nation might well follow in regulating the great corporations . . . the control of which . . . has become such a problem for Congress."²⁰

Massachusetts law restricted private corporations nearly as much as it did the utilities. When corporate organization came to be widely adopted as a business form in the 1890's, many states competed for the business of issuing charters; but Massachusetts was slow to meet the competition.²¹ In fact businesses which chose to incorporate in Massachusetts had a rugged time of it. Since Massachusetts taxed not only the value of the tangible property of a corporation but also the "corporate excess," that is, the market value of the securities in excess of property value, the more successful corporations fled Massachusetts to states with more lenient taxation laws. Massachusetts laws, moreover, discouraged holding companies, not only because the principal assets of holding companies were securities which were taxable even though representing other taxable securities,²² but because the law required all corporations to secure special permission from the General Court in order to hold the securities of other corporations.²³ When the depression of the 1890's lifted and incorporations multiplied throughout the country, Massachusetts did not share in the movement. Annual incorporations in the state barely increased between 1897 and 1901. In the latter year almost

¹⁹ The contemporary economist-reformer, William Z. Ripley, pointed out: "While of course there is no direct relation between capitalization and prices, an excess of securities craving dividends is in itself an indirect incentive to unreasonable charges. . . . This was the underlying motive in the enactment of the Massachusetts Anti-Stock Watering Laws of 1894. For a divergence between the actual property value and capitalization may lead to exorbitant prices and dividends at the expense of the public." *Trusts, Pools and Corporations* (Boston, 1905), p. xxiii. Without ever referring to Massachusetts, Wisconsin insurgent Robert M. LaFollette acknowledged these principles in his repeated efforts after 1906 to authorize the Interstate Commerce Commission to determine the physical valuation of interstate railroads preliminary to setting rates. But as early as 1901, Henry C. Adams, statistician for the I.C.C., argued for federal adoption of the Massachusetts techniques because they amounted to physical valuation for purposes of ascertaining just rates and just taxes. Testimony before the United States Industrial Commission on Transportation, *Commission Reports*, vol. IX (1901), House Document 178, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 373 *et seq.* See also testimony of W. Z. Ripley, *ibid.*, pp. 291 *et seq.*

²⁰ Quoted in the *Brockton Enterprise*, Dec. 17, 1908.

²¹ Henry R. Seager and Charles A. Gulick, Jr., *Trust and Corporation Problems* (New York and London, 1929), pp. 35 *et seq.*

²² Harry G. Friedman, *The Taxation of Corporations in Massachusetts* (New York, 1907), pp. 78, 83.

²³ Seager and Gulick, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

twice as many corporations doing business in Massachusetts obtained foreign charters as obtained Massachusetts charters.²⁴

In general, those who aimed their fire at the misdeeds of the "trusts" considered Massachusetts' techniques worth copying. President Roosevelt declared before a Boston audience in 1902: "Most of our difficulties [with trusts] would be in a fair way of solution if we had the power to put in the national statute books, and did put upon them, laws for the nation such as those you have here on the subject of corporations in Massachusetts. . . ." ²⁵ Charles E. Littlefield, chairman of a congressional subcommittee on trusts, urged copying at least the publicity features of Massachusetts laws, arguing that "None of the great combinations of which complaint is made . . . could have been financed" if the public knew about overcapitalization.²⁶

III

Massachusetts' contributions to "social justice" at the turn of the century were not confined to democratic political institutions and restraint of business practices. Contemporaries generally recognized its leadership in labor legislation. In a volume published in 1907, historian John H. Latané wrote: "In the effort to improve the condition of the laboring classes through direct legislation, Massachusetts has led the way, and her child-labor and factory laws have been followed by many of the other states."²⁷ Massachusetts pioneered in child labor legislation (1836); instituted the first state factory inspection system (1866); and first limited the day's work for women and minors to ten hours (1874). The Bay State was the first to establish a bureau of labor statistics, the first to compel corporations to pay employees weekly, and the first to forbid corporations to pay wages in store truck.

²⁴ Grosvenor Calkins, "The Massachusetts Business Corporation Law," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XVIII (1904), 269-280, reprinted in Ripley, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-392. In 1897, 280 Massachusetts businesses incorporated under Massachusetts law, while 263 took foreign charters; in 1898, the numbers were 251 and 298, respectively; in 1899, 281 and 466; in 1900, 264 and 423; and in 1901, 211 and 524. Frederick J. Stimson and Charles G. Washburn, *Report of the Committee on Corporation Laws* (Printed as a Massachusetts Senate Document) (1903), p. 19.

²⁵ *Boston Herald*, Aug. 27, 1902. Roosevelt cited in particular the provisions in the Massachusetts law, (1) requiring that all stock be paid in before any corporate charter could be granted, (2) requiring auction sale or price fixing by commissions of stock issues by public service corporations, (3) holding corporate directors personally responsible for debts exceeding capitalization and for dividends which render the corporation insolvent, and (4) requiring publicity for a corporation's financial condition to the extent of ordering dissolution if such reports were not filed for two successive years.

²⁶ U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Trusts, *Majority Report on a Bill to Amend the Sherman Antitrust Act*, House Report 3375, to accompany H.R. 17, 57th Cong., 2d Sess. (1903), p. 18.

²⁷ *America as a World Power* (New York, 1907), vol. XXV of *The American Nation*, edited by Albert Bushnell Hart, p. 308.

But Massachusetts' claim to fame does not rest on priority alone. As two careful students of the subject wrote in 1910:

Massachusetts has been generally regarded as the center of advanced labor legislation in America. Part of that well-earned reputation is due to the priority of important laws passed in this Commonwealth which have been copied, often verbatim, by many other states; but it cannot be explained on that basis alone. Although several of the states which have followed Massachusetts as a leader have at some points distinctly bettered her instruction, it is still true that not many other states in America have laws which go so far toward complete protection of employees as do those in Massachusetts.²⁸

The same investigators also found that, "without a doubt," Massachusetts had a larger proportion of employers who made a serious effort to provide good working conditions for their employees than other states. They attributed this to the fact that Massachusetts factories on the average were older than factories in other states, and many such establishments had been run by families for generations. Labor laws, in fact, were often sponsored by precisely these familial factory owners in order to bring into line newer factory owners who might compete too successfully with the more paternalistic ones.²⁹ Moreover, labor legislation early became a "habit" with Massachusetts employers; they learned to live with regulations and to assume they embodied an indigenous social standard.

Massachusetts also led in the enforcement and administration of labor laws. During the enthusiastic Progressive years, New York and Wisconsin passed Massachusetts in providing certain advanced machinery for the enforcement of the laws. But even in this respect, the deficiencies were limited to milder penal provisions than other states had, some uncertainty in the relation between local and state inspection procedures, insufficiently comprehensive civil service examinations, and the failure to make factory inspection the sole occupation of inspectors. The same investigators who noted these deficiencies, however, also maintained: "It is not to other states of the Union that . . . [Massachusetts] must look for a model toward which to reconstruct existing methods. . . . Not only in her laws regulating

²⁸ Edith Reeves and Caroline Manning, "The Standing of Massachusetts in the Administration of Labor Legislation," *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, edited by Susan M. Kingsley (New York, 1911), p. 223. It is important to understand that Misses Reeves and Manning directed their study toward finding weaknesses in the Massachusetts legislation and administration. The quoted passage is an introductory one; the bent of the article is that, as progressive as Massachusetts was, it did not go far enough. See also Robert H. Whitten, "Trend of Legislation in the United States," [*New York State Library Bulletin*, Legislation, No. 12 (Albany, 1902), p. 411.

²⁹ Cf. Handlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205, and 241.

conditions of labor, but in laws requiring their enforcement, does Massachusetts seem to stand toward the top in the United States."³⁰

It is not difficult to list additional achievements, identified after 1900 with Progressivism, in which Massachusetts led the country. Massachusetts Congressman Augustus P. Gardner, for example, was able to quote in 1902 from a compendium of pure-food legislation prepared for the state legislature of Georgia: "Massachusetts may be said to have nearer a perfect code of pure-food laws than any other State or country which has given thought to the subject of preventing food adulteration under its myriad forms and disguises."³¹ The New York State legislative reference service reported in 1902 that "the movement to encourage the establishment of free public libraries . . . [which] started in 1890 with the establishment of a free public library commission in Massachusetts" had equipped more than 1,800 Bay State towns with free libraries, leaving by 1901 less than .05 per cent of the state population without such service. "Following the example of Massachusetts," the report continued, "special library commissions . . . have now been provided in fourteen states. . . ."³² In sum, as the reform-conscious *Independent* declared on the mom of the new century: "It is Massachusetts that leads all her sister commonwealths in progressive legislation, and in wisely directed reform movements."³³

IV

One might expect, therefore, that the nation's insurgents during the Progressive Era would have used Massachusetts as the model for advanced legislative techniques, for the responsiveness of its political institutions, for its quality of political behavior, for its techniques of regulating corporate practices, and for its methods of securing "social justice." One might expect, moreover, that the Bay State would have welcomed insurgency and the adoption of its laws, even without acknowledgment, by other states. But Massachusetts never caught the spirit of *change* which dominated the era, and consequently it appeared, at best, merely conservative. It was rather the "Wisconsin Idea," the "Iowa Idea," and (in New Jersey) simply the "New Idea" which quickened the hearts of men of good will and good hope dur-

³⁰ Reeves and Manning, *loc. cit.*, pp. 263-264.

³¹ *Congressional Record*, 57th Cong., 2d Sess. (Dec. 18, 1902), p. 440. See also U.S. Congress, Senate, Com. on Mfrs., *Digest of the Pure Food and Drug Laws of the United States and Foreign Countries*, Senate Report 3 (1901), *passim*.

³² Whitten, *loc. cit.*, pp. 429-430.

³³ "Contrasting Records of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts," *Independent*, LIII (July 4, 1901), 1568-1570.

ing the Progressive Era. Historians have followed by neglecting Massachusetts' achievements and emphasizing its undeniable conservatism.

If Massachusetts did not share conspicuously in the "quest for social justice" characteristic of the American states during the earlier years of the twentieth century, it may well be because it had less to search for. What was "New" to reformers elsewhere in the country was often "Old" to Massachusetts. For example, its political leaders resisted formal democratic innovations in the state's political system, and therefore deserved the epithet "conservative" which contemporary insurgents and subsequent historians applied to them. Yet it is important to keep in mind that if Massachusetts did not have in name the kind of laws which Progressives demanded elsewhere in the country, it did have to a substantial degree the benefit of the practices which the reformers advocated. "There are many States," Theodore Roosevelt wrote to his friend Henry Cabot Lodge, "in which Legislatures have functioned badly, and in which the people are groping for a remedy"; for such states, the initiative and compulsory referendum appeared "the only remedy in sight." He agreed with Lodge that "I & R" were unnecessary in Massachusetts.³⁴ Roosevelt felt similarly about the recall of judges and judicial decisions: "You are absolutely right," he confided to his biographer, Charles G. Washburn. ". . . I have always said that in Massachusetts recall by the Legislature was enough. . . . In Missouri and California, more was needed."³⁵ He added ironically to another acquaintance, "It is rather funny to think that if the Massachusetts and Vermont methods of electing and removing Judges were advanced by me, I should be denounced as almost a Communist."³⁶ Massachusetts had enjoyed the practices which Roosevelt alluded to from the time it had become a state.

Similarly, Massachusetts achieved its advanced position on corporation regulation from a long tradition of conservative business practices under government supervision. Incorporation originated in Massachusetts as a device by which groups of private entrepreneurs served as agencies of the state toward a public purpose. The services which the corporate body was to provide for the commonweal justified the privileges which the state granted in the charter.³⁷ Massachusetts business at the beginning of the twentieth century had not entirely outgrown the discipline imposed by that early tradition. Whatever their social or political views, many in the Massachusetts business community — especially, but not exclusively, the domi-

³⁴ Roosevelt to Lodge, Dec. 13, 1911, in Henry Cabot Lodge (ed.), *Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge* (New York, 1925), II, 416-417.

³⁵ Roosevelt to Washburn, March 31, 1915, in the Roosevelt Memorial Association Collection, Widener Library, Harvard University (hereafter, RMA MSS).

³⁶ Roosevelt to Louis A. Frothingham, Dec. 17, 1914, RMA MSS.

³⁷ Oscar and Mary Handlin, "Origins of the American Business Corporation," *Journal of Economic History*, V (May 1945), 1-23.

nant older families — tended to suspect the radical tendencies of American finance capitalism.³⁸

“Overcapitalization is a fraud” — it was as plain as that to Massachusetts Congressman George P. Lawrence. In arguing for a national incorporation law and a stronger Interstate Commerce Commission, Lawrence announced his determination “to make these creatures of the State render honest service to the State.”³⁹ Similarly, Senator Lodge wrote to Lucius Tuttle, president of the Boston & Maine Railroad, who was resisting expanded federal regulation of corporations in interstate commerce:

I don't quite accept your proposition that these questions can be left to natural law because the railroads don't exist by natural laws. . . . They are founded on the grant of the highways of commerce and they are given by the government what amounts to a general power to tax all persons who use it. . . . The taxing power cannot exist without any appeal of its abuse. . . . You substantially admit this by your approval of the principle of supervision adopted in Massachusetts.⁴⁰

The events which motivated the passage of the “anti-stock watering” laws of 1894 further illustrate the distrust of financial practices then acceptable in most parts of the country. In 1892, the Connecticut River Railroad persuaded the General Court to permit it to issue to its stockholders at par 24,200 shares of stock, then selling on the market at \$235. To many it appeared a gratuity to stockholders of more than \$100 per share. The issue, moreover, would have doubled the total capitalization of the company upon which dividends had to be paid. A public uproar followed, and Governor William E. Russell vetoed the enabling legislation, declaring that it would place “an unnecessary burden . . . each year upon the business of the railroad, that is, upon the public. . . .”⁴¹ The next year a new legislature passed the restrictive acts. As one economist complained some years later: “In most other states the matter would probably have attracted little attention at that

³⁸ For example, George von L. Meyer, a State Street stockbroker who served as postmaster general under Roosevelt and secretary of the navy under Taft, asserted: “The laws of New Jersey and Delaware and even Maine which permit these corporations of enormous capital to be formed, often with very limited amount of cash paid in, are really a curse. . . .” Meyer continued, “If the corporation laws of Massachusetts, or those similar to them” were adopted by the federal government, the country would be spared the panics which periodically threatened the economy. Meyer to H. C. Lodge, Aug. 12, 1903, George von L. Meyer Papers, Mass. Historical Society, Boston, Mass.

³⁹ *Congressional Record*, 57th Cong., 2d Sess. (Feb 6, 1903), p. 1793.

⁴⁰ Lodge to Tuttle, c. Jan. 1905, Henry Cabot Lodge papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.; hereafter “Lodge MSS.” Cf. Kirkland, *op. cit.*, II, 232: “Although individual railroad managers and investors sometimes asserted that the railroad was in the same business and legal category as a factory, that the state ought to refrain from interfering with railroad management . . . their chatter was wishful and instinctive; it was neither representative of dominant thinking nor in accord with New England practice.”

⁴¹ Quoted in Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 35n.

time. . . . After all, the new stock was to be paid for in cash at the par value, and the proceeds were to be devoted to necessary improvements. . . . But in Massachusetts the project was assailed as 'indirect stock watering.'"⁴²

Probably one reason for this kind of conservatism was that many in Massachusetts found the laws and the economic attitudes they expressed conducive to good business.⁴³ At a Senate hearing on railroad legislation, Senator Francis Newlands of Nevada asked Lucius Tuttle whether he considered Massachusetts' restrictive laws wise. Tuttle replied: "I think they are. . . . The conservative character of . . . our laws very greatly strengthens the market value in the minds of the investors in our securities."⁴⁴ Certainly the experience of Massachusetts railroads bore out Tuttle's observation. At the depth of the depression following the Panic of 1893, the Railroad Commission was able to report: "There has been no dearth of capital seeking investment; . . . [Massachusetts railroad stocks] are sought by conservative investors at higher prices today than twelve months ago; and the same is true of some of the street railway stocks."⁴⁵

Massachusetts had had no need of a reform movement to alert its community to the excesses of modern corporate enterprise. On the other hand, most of the states conspicuous for reform movements after 1900 entered the Union just at the time when corporate enterprise was gaining independence from the original principles of incorporation. Populated by individuals "on the make," who had left established communities to break away from the traditions and institutions and anything else they held responsible for their past discontents, these states — it seems reasonable to argue — lacked the sources of a rooted tradition which might have enabled their citizens to look to the government as a legitimate agent of a unified and purposive

⁴² Charles J. Bullock, "Control of the Capitalization of Public Service Corporations in Massachusetts," *American Economic Association Quarterly*, X (1909), 401. The Railroad Commission, in its report of 1894, commented favorably on the legislation: "It was the evident purpose of the Legislature . . . to guard against the dangers and temptations of . . . gratuitous capitalization, and to eliminate as far as possible the speculative element from the financial economy of the railroad and other corporations created for public use." Mass. Bd. R.R. Commrs., *26th Ann. Rpt.* (1895), pp. 13-14. The Commission reaffirmed these sentiments in 1900. See *32nd Ann. Rpt.* (1900), pp. 93-94.

⁴³ The same conservative attitude sometimes extended to corporate enterprise conducted by Massachusetts businessmen outside the state. William B. Gates, Jr., historian of the Michigan copper mining industry, has written: "Conservative Boston financing and management also explains why rapid exploitation of properties for stock manipulative purposes played an insignificant part in the Michigan history, in marked contrast with certain periods of the Montana and Arizona story." *Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 69; see also p. 189.

⁴⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interstate Commerce, *Hearings on Proposed Amendment of the Interstate Commerce Act*, Senate Document 243, 58th Cong., 3d Sess. (1905), pp. 947-948.

⁴⁵ Bd. of R.R. Commrs., *26th Ann. Rpt.* (1895), p. 97. See also succeeding reports.

community. By the end of the nineteenth century they began to learn, in the words of Frederick Jackson Turner, "that unrestrained competition and combination meant the triumph of the strongest, [and] the seizure in the interest of a dominant class of the strategic points of the nation's life"; that "between the ideal of individualism, unrestrained by society, and the ideal of democracy, was an innate conflict"; and "that their very ambitions and forcefulness had endangered their democracy."⁴⁶ By then, it was necessary to inaugurate sensational "exposés" to carry reform measures against the opposition of entrenched political interests; to wage dramatic campaigns on behalf of ordinary democratic principles; and to acclaim the "New" so that old virtues and social values could be restored. These were genuine causes. But Massachusetts did not have the same battle to fight.

In addition to legal and social traditions which made meliorative action "normal" in Massachusetts, its business community did not suffer from many of the specific grievances which motivated so many of the radical demands in the insurgent states. Massachusetts corporations did not have to depend upon great outside financial centers for funds.⁴⁷ Local stock ownership was widespread, and major owners were rarely more distant than Boston. Railroad directors and the merchants who depended upon them, as well as financiers and the manufacturers who required their services, tended to mingle in the same social milieu. These conditions tended to reduce the opportunities for misunderstandings as well as the temptations for underhanded or suspicious business practices.⁴⁸

A clash of temperaments and of interests sharpened the alienation of Massachusetts from the Progressive Movement. Although Theodore Roosevelt, on the eve of his bolt from the Republican party, credited Massachusetts with an advanced position in many things identified with Progressivism, no one in 1911 would seriously have expected Massachusetts to contribute significantly to the insurgents' cause. "I have always insisted that a good many of you were progressives," Roosevelt wrote to Lodge, "only unfortunately without knowing it and therefore without being able to impress the fact upon the rest of the country."⁴⁹ He also noted that men like Lodge shared certain important values with the Progressives, in particular the

⁴⁶ F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920), p. 203.

⁴⁷ See testimony of Stuyvesant Fish before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce in 1905, *op. cit.*, p. 296. During the same hearing, Senator Newlands asked Lucius Tuttle, "Is it not a fact that all these conditions are of the very best in Massachusetts, as contrasted with other parts of the country, and is it not a fact that so far as the southern . . . and . . . western railroads are concerned most of them are financed through a few great financiers in New York?" Tuttle replied that it was so, and that the reason was that the western and southern railroads could not easily raise the capital any other way. *Ibid.*, p. 1002.

⁴⁸ See Kirkland, *op. cit.*, II, 249, 252, 255.

⁴⁹ Roosevelt to Lodge, May 31, 1911, RMA MSS.

premium they placed on social responsibility over individual liberty in the management of private property.⁵⁰ But Lodge could not “know” he was a Progressive — he was not — not only because of his profoundly conservative temperament, but also because he was circumstantially unsuited for the role of an insurgent.

The Progressives directed their assault not merely against abuses in American society, but also against vested political and economic interests which they held responsible for those abuses. Even if their temperament had allowed them to sympathize with the insurgents, Lodge and his colleagues were vulnerable as leaders in an incumbent political party. In addition, as representatives for established economic interests in their state, they had a responsibility which placed them even more certainly on the defensive than did political incumbency or conservative temperament. For, very particular interests — sectional, political and economic — provided much of the power behind the impulse for Progressive reform.⁵¹ And although insurgent leaders usually assumed a moral rhetoric, the “evil” they condemned in many cases was merely the greater power or advantage of their competitors.

For many reasons, Massachusetts at the turn of the century held an advantageous competitive position in such enterprises as woolens, cottons and shoe manufacturing. Though it produced no wool, it made most of the woolen fabrics in the country and sold them back to the wool-growing regions. It produced no cotton but sold cottons in the South and fine cotton goods in the southern mill towns themselves. It produced no hides, but sold leather, boots and shoes throughout the Southwest and West. It was also an important producer of paper and paper products, machinery, wire, watches and tools — and similarly dependent upon the outside for its raw materials.

One reason it could do all this was that it had the advantage of skilled labor, and well-trained direction of that labor. Its financial facilities, moreover, were near by and it could obtain credit at low cost. Its industry had the advantage of proximity to the great export markets in New York City and its own capital, Boston. Certainly not least important, however, was the simple fact that Massachusetts industry was established *early*, and therefore enjoyed the economic advantages of priority in important markets, and political advantages as a vested interest.

⁵⁰ Lodge and many of the Massachusetts congressmen and state officials also shared with a great many of the Progressives a nationalistic fervor, with racist overtones, which led them to promote America's imperialist ventures in the 1890's, as well as the drive to restrict immigration and to build a large navy. See William E. Leuchtenburg, “Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898–1916,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX (1953), 483–504.

⁵¹ Cf. Arthur S. Link, “What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?” *American Historical Review*, LXIV (July 1959), 833–851, esp. 834.

Its accessibility to water transportation somewhat offset the great rail distances of the sources of its raw materials. Its economy was nevertheless extraordinarily dependent upon rail transportation — and conversely, as long as the chief terminals were in Boston, railroads servicing New England had a substantial interest in maintaining the prosperity of the region's economy.

It is small wonder, therefore, that New England businessmen suspected innovations in the law which might tend to remove or weaken their influence with railroad policy. For Massachusetts industry depended upon the favorable rates — privileged rates, if you will — which its railroads were able to obtain for it, compared with the rates obtained by nascent competitors nearer the chief domestic markets and the sources of raw materials. For example, the Boston & Albany Railroad and trunk lines connecting with it at the Hudson River gave wire manufacturers in Worcester, Massachusetts, special rates so that the total cost of shipping wire to points west of Pittsburg would not exceed the shipping cost from Pittsburg manufacturers. Without such differentials, the Worcester manufacturers would have gone out of business.⁵² Similarly, railroads from cotton-producing regions in the South charged lower through-rates to Massachusetts than to nearer points in the Midwest, Georgia, or North Carolina. Partly this was because of water competition from New Orleans and Galveston to Boston. But railroad men willingly admitted their desire to support the New England mills.

As Lucius Tuttle explained to Democratic Senator Edward W. Carmack of Tennessee during the hearings on the Esch-Townshend bill in 1905:

Suppose a city has a population of 30,000 . . . engaged in the manufacture of shoes and the product of their manufacture is distributed to the world at a loss to the railroads; yet the carrying of the other things for those 30,000 people at . . . profitable rates compensates for the loss occasioned by the low rates. So it is all through the administration of railways. . . . [Tuttle went on:] Perhaps in the city of Lowell 40,000 out of the population of 80,000 are dependent upon textile industries for their living. If those mills for any reason are closed that [*sic*] 40,000 people cease to live in Lowell, for they have nothing else to do; the traffic of that [*sic*] 40,000 people over the railroads going into Lowell would cease.⁵³

Carmack protested: "That is a case, then, where the railroads have practically created an industry and built up a great community by giving a very low rate for a very long haul. . . . And yet at the same time other communities have languished because they could not get equal rates for a short haul." Tuttle agreed this was so. As Carmack and insurgents elsewhere in the country viewed it, "These artificial conditions created by the railroads

⁵² *Hearings* (1905), Senate Document 243, *ou. cit.*, p. 923.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 919, 975-976.

... counteracted the natural economical disadvantage" of a particular industrial site. The insurgents would have corrected these artificial conditions with a rate-setting commission. New Englanders, on the other hand, viewed exactly *that* kind of action as artificial.⁵⁴

In any case, it is clear that Massachusetts had good reason to believe its prosperity depended greatly upon the very disparity between long and short haul rates which became one of the central points of the insurgent attack during the Progressive Era.⁵⁵ Consequently, although Massachusetts had pioneered in the effective control of railroads, it dragged its feet against efforts to strengthen the federal regulatory bodies. The point is not to justify Massachusetts' resistance to the efforts of reformers throughout the country to end genuinely iniquitous conditions, but rather to explain it, as well as to shed some light on why Massachusetts' achievements have remained in shadow.

The tariff issue further illustrates the point. Probably no issue was more important in provoking revolt within and against the Republican party across the nation. As the twentieth century opened, the Dingley Tariff of 1897 governed American foreign trade. Although it is not clear that Massachusetts industries benefited inordinately from the Dingley provisions,⁵⁶ protectionism had become for many a tenet of the Republican creed and a test of party fealty. There was in fact a growing demand in Massachusetts for downward revision of the tariff rates: as new competitors entered the domestic markets, and transportation costs proved increasingly disadvantageous to Massachusetts industry, the state's businessmen turned to foreign markets and sources of raw materials. Nevertheless, most Republican leaders in the state were reluctant to urge revision because it might tend to undermine protectionism on which the party based its appeal to the labor element as well as to the sizable woolen, watch-making, and other industries. They pointed out, moreover, that the rest of the country would not accept a revision which placed raw materials on the free list while maintaining the protective duties on manufactured products.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 973-976. For some contemporary discussion of this issue, see William Z. Ripley, *Railroads: Rates and Regulation* (New York, 1912), pp. 159-162.

⁵⁵ The Boston Chamber of Commerce declared itself "keenly alive to the danger that would menace New England business interests, if by putting the rate-making power into the hands of the Interstate Commerce Commission, or some other Government tribunal, it should result in fixing rates mainly on a mileage basis, as might ultimately, under the circumstances, come to be the basis for transportation of freight." Boston Chamber of Commerce, *20th Ann. Rpt.* (1906), p. 21. See also the debate between Senators Bristow of Kansas and Lodge on the Court of Commerce bill in 1910. *Congressional Record*, 61st Cong., 2d Sess. (May 10, 1910), pp. 6011-6016.

⁵⁶ In exchange for a duty on raw wool, Massachusetts wool manufacturers received a more-than-compensatory "protective" duty. Other manufactures also received protection. But the increase in the rates on hides, ores, coal, sugar, and such could in no way have benefited Massachusetts.

In any case, the difference on the tariff between Massachusetts and most Progressive leaders, especially those in Congress, was not protectionism versus free trade or tariff-for-revenue-only, but which interests were to benefit by particular tariff schedules. Robert M. La Follette, who helped to write the avowedly protectionist McKinley Tariff of 1890, saw nothing wrong with the "home market" idea in general, which, he said, "has been the basis of effective appeal to the farmers to support high protective duties": "The theory was sound. The argument was logical. . . . It was effective." But it was clear that so far the "wrong" interests were benefiting disproportionately.⁵⁷

This is not to disparage the idealistic fervor which in general motivated Progressives such as La Follette. Rather, it is to point out that one explanation for the alienation of Massachusetts from the Progressive Movement, as a movement, was that many insurgents chose the state as an object for attack for a variety of reasons. Both in their capacity as representatives of particular interests competing with Massachusetts interests, and in their genuine conviction that Massachusetts interests had appropriated an undue share of the rewards of American society, insurgents tended to place the Bay State on the defensive.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to elaborate on the specific predicaments faced by Massachusetts and the Progressives. To explain the penumbral status of Massachusetts among Progressive insurgents (and, perhaps as a consequence, among many historians) it may be sufficient to note again that its achievements were often inspired by a tradition of conservatism. To a maturing nation, hurrying to catch up with its age in a brand-new century, the insurgent spirit of La Follette's Wisconsin as well as its program appeared more appropriate. Its program of responsible government, corporation control and social justice, then and subsequently advertised as "more comprehensive and far-reaching" than that of other states, and conspicuous as much for the struggle waged on its behalf as for its success, "became an article for export both to other states and to other countries." "But in 1900," writes its historian, "all this lay in the future."⁵⁸

For Massachusetts in 1900, the achievement of most of this program lay in the past.

⁵⁷ Robert M. La Follette, "The Farmer and the Tariff Bill," *La Follette's Magazine* (Sept. 13, 1913), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Maxwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 and 9.

10

BUSINESS INTERESTS IN THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

Although the major theme of the progressive era was reform, most historians have agreed that the progressive movement, for all its successes, left American society essentially intact. Many of the same titans of industry and finance still controlled the nation's productive resources, and the same classes of people shaped social policy. Though some of the rhetoric had changed, the profit motive continued to dominate economic activity and the nation remained committed to private entrepreneurial capitalism. Hopes of "rationalizing" the economy in the interest of some broad social purpose never gained a trial (unless one wishes to count mobilization for the World War a progressive enterprise). Even the limited objective of effecting a better distribution of wealth and income utterly failed; the share of the national income earned by the top 10 per cent of the nation's income recipients rose to 38 per cent in 1921, 4 per cent higher than in 1910.

Historians have, of course, debated just how much the progressives really wanted to change. The usual picture of the "typical progressive" is that he was a rather conservative and even nostalgic fellow who would reform in order to preserve. Woodrow Wilson revealed much about progressivism when he compared the movement to Lewis Carroll's Red Queen, who was impelled to run twice as fast in order to remain in the same place; and Louis Post's quip that likened T. R.'s program to a rocking horse — "much motion and no progress" — struck an apt note. By and large, it seems the progressives were very much devoted to the notion of keeping American society intact, at least as they imagined it.

At the same time, many substantial changes, however "superficial," unquestionably were made, and historians have further debated just whom those changes were intended to benefit as well as who in fact benefited from them. Although there was a strong anti-commercial bias in the progressive impulse, R. Wiebe [*Businessmen and Reform* (1962)] and others have shown that business groups themselves initiated many of the most important progressive reforms; without at least the support of merchants and small businessmen who suffered at the hands of the railroads and the giant corporations, measures such as the Federal Trade Commission and the several railroad reform bills could never have passed. On the other hand, some — notably J. Chamberlain [*Farewell to Reform* (1931)] and M. Josephson [*The President Makers* (1940)] — have contended that the creation of governmental regu-

latory agencies (for example) merely gave the dominant business groups new sources of power for dictating to the rest of the people so that the practical consequence of that class of progressive reform was to make conditions worse.

Gabriel Kolko [*The Triumph of Conservatism* (1963)] has carried this contention still further, arguing that it was the dominant business groups who shaped the economic reforms of the era so as to ensure their own continued dominance. That representatives of the "Business Establishment," such as Richard Olney and Judge Elbert Gary, spoke seriously of using the new government agencies for their own purposes — both to protect private price and market agreements and to buffer popular criticism — lends support to Kolko's thesis. So does the fact that agencies such as the ICC and FTC have, during certain eras, served precisely such purposes. [See, e.g., G. C. Davis, "The Transformation of the Federal Trade Commission, 1914-1929," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIX (Dec. 1962).] But it remains to be demonstrated that the reforms themselves had their origins in or usually became the instruments of such purposes.

It is clear that businessmen had a keen interest in the new political developments. As the federal government began its rise to power in the political economy, business leaders hastened to accommodate themselves to it, to protect themselves against it or in hope of influencing it. On the whole the accommodation was successful, either because of the genius of the American business community or because federal ascendancy was invoked in the first place by diverse business interests themselves. In the following article, R. H. Wiebe (Professor of History, Northwestern University) discusses the impact upon "Wall Street." Because the Morgan interests held dominance over much of the American economy at the start of the century, they regarded federal ascendancy as a distinct threat. Mr. Wiebe shows how the Morgan group managed to protect itself during the Roosevelt Administration, only to run afoul of the highly traditionalistic William Howard Taft. The article is important not only for the insights it affords into the "anti-trust" policies of the Roosevelt and Taft Administrations, but also for its suggestions about the change in business attitudes toward the federal government.

On the general subject, students should also see Wiebe's "Business Disunity and the Progressive Movement, 1901-1914," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIV (March 1958); J. Weinstein, "Organized Business and the City Commission and Manager Movements," *Journal of Southern History*, XXVIII (May 1962); S. P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (Oct. 1964).

The House of Morgan and the Executive, 1905-1913

ROBERT H. WIEBE

Early in 1902, when Theodore Roosevelt's administration began anti-trust proceedings, against the Northern Securities Company, John Pierpont Morgan, its organizer, reputedly complained to Roosevelt, "If we have done anything wrong . . . send your man to my man and they can fix it up."¹ Several years later, in the midst of the Panic of 1907, Elbert H. Gary and Henry Clay Frick hurried to Washington to ask Roosevelt's advice. The two men, who represented Morgan interests in the United States Steel Corporation, told Roosevelt about a plan to purchase for United States Steel a controlling interest in the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company. Presenting the proposal as a bit of altruism designed to save a hard-pressed brokerage firm that owned the stock, they requested assurances that the purchase would not bring antitrust prosecution against the Steel Corporation. Roosevelt gave vague blessings, and the House of Morgan completed the transaction.²

Such familiar anecdotes are the material used to describe Wall Street-Washington relations during the progressive era. Contemporary reformers popularized these stories as illustrations of big business incorrigibility and unscrupulousness. Historians, denied access to most businessmen's records and primarily concerned with the course of liberal reform, have accepted them as anecdotes.

Back of these stories lay a consistent pattern, unified by Wall Street's view of the federal government. According to an official biographer, Roosevelt, after listening to Morgan's ideas on corporation control, commented,

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¹ Quoted in Mark Sullivan, *Our Times: The United States 1900-1925* (6 vols., New York, 1927), II (*America Finding Herself*), 414. See also Joseph Bucklin Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times* (2 vols., New York, 1920), I, 184.

² Frederick Lewis Allen, *The Lords of Creation* (New York, 1935), 139-40; Henry F. Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Bibliography* (New York, 1931), 441-43. As Roosevelt phrased it, "I felt it no public duty of mine to interpose any objections." Bishop, *Roosevelt*, II, 55. Gary later called this "tacit acquiescence." House Committee on Investigation of United States Steel Corporation (May 27, 1911-Apr. 13, 1912, 62 Cong., 2 sess.), *United States Steel Corporation, Hearings* (53 pts., Washington, D.C., 1911-12), June 7, 1911, pt. 4, p. 167.

"Mr. Morgan could not help regarding me as a big rival operator, who either intended to ruin all his interests, or else could be induced to come to an agreement to ruin none."³ That insight held the essence of Wall Street's attitude. The New York magnates included the federal government among the autonomous blocs they found in American society. Generically, the government belonged with the Standard Oil Company and the American Federation of Labor. As a corollary, each bloc enjoyed primary power within its particular sphere, which meant that relations among these units roughly paralleled diplomacy among sovereign states.

Wall Street's leaders, reflecting their own involvement, usually spoke of the government in economic language. To the railroad magnate James J. Hill, the President served as chairman of the board for the "great economic corporation known as the United States of America."⁴ Applying Wall Street logic, Hill argued that government regulation equaled federal ownership. The government, through the Interstate Commerce Commission, would have the seat of power on the boards of all railroads and could then determine policy.⁵ Business journals, reasoning from similar premises, hoped for a "reconciliation" between the administration and the railroads and, more generally, "a proper 'balance of power' between the government and the corporations."⁶

In this theory the government was intrinsically neither good nor evil. Its worth varied with circumstances. In the wrong hands — Bryan's, for example — the government became, like the labor unions, an enemy. With the right men in office, it operated like a friendly corporation cooperating under a community of interest agreement.

The magnates did not sharpen their ideas with precise definitions. They had a flexible approach rather than a pat theory. Yet their orientation clearly obviated a government that arises from the whole society and in turn promotes the general welfare. Nor would their approach enable the government to act as a dispenser of justice above society's units. Early in the century, in fact, Wall Street's leaders ranked the government among the second-rate powers. When speculating about a battle between Washington and Standard Oil, Wall Street odds lay with John D. Rockefeller.⁷

At no time, however, did the magnates leave the government's disposition to chance. In various ways they cultivated the political influence they had inherited from the nineteenth century. Some, like the steel leaders Henry

³ Bishop, *Roosevelt*, I, 185.

⁴ Quoted in George Mowry, *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, The New American Nation Series, ed. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris (New York, 1958), 216.

⁵ "Address Delivered June 4, 1902," James J. Hill, *Addresses* (n.p., n.d.).

⁶ *Railway Age*, XLIII (Mar. 22, 1907), 373; *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 24, 1904.

⁷ *New York Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin*, June 25, 1906.

Clay Frick, worked intimately with local party leaders.⁸ George W. Perkins, a Morgan partner, preferred the free play of Washington, where in 1908 he lobbied simultaneously for corporation, financial, and tariff legislation.⁹ Political involvement sometimes bred contempt ("I suppose," sighed J. P. Morgan, Jr., "that when one deals with politicians one must expect to be lied to."),¹⁰ and other Wall Street men joined Frank A. Vanderlip, vice-president of the National City Bank, who sat in his office and read reports from his two Washington agents.¹¹ Only the elder Morgan could call Senator Nelson W. Aldrich into his office and present him with a currency bill or have Aldrich telegraph political news while he vacationed on his yacht.¹² All of them toughened the fiber of their political connections by distributing the funds that made effective campaigning possible.

With the magnates' nineteenth-century inheritance came an emphasis upon Congressional connections. Congress made the government's economic policy in the days of Benjamin Harrison and William McKinley, and at the turn of the century the Republican Big Four — Nelson W. Aldrich, Orville H. Platt, John C. Spooner, and William B. Allison — still held sway with Mark Hanna in the Senate. Then Roosevelt tipped the balance. He sprang the Northern Securities prosecution, intervened in the anthracite coal strike, and forced the Department of Commerce and Labor bill through a reluctant Congress. Both his methods and his acts transformed the executive into a formidable power. Wall Street, in order to maintain its influence, either had to remove the rambunctious Roosevelt as soon as possible, or it had to establish strong bonds with the executive. By 1904, the first alternative — if many Wall Street men ever seriously entertained it — had vanished. Roosevelt, financed by Wall Street contributions, was triumphantly returned to office with the largest percentage of the popular vote since Monroe.¹³

On January 28, 1905, Secretary of Commerce and Labor Victor Metcalf ordered Commissioner of Corporations James R. Garfield to investigate United States Steel.¹⁴ After some months' delay, Garfield sent a subordinate

⁸ Frick to Philander C. Knox, Nov. 11, 1901, Philander C. Knox Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

⁹ Perkins to Morgan, Mar. 16, 1908, George W. Perkins Papers, Michigan State University.

¹⁰ J. P. Morgan, Jr., to Perkins, Oct. 28, 1907, *ibid.*

¹¹ Jerome J. Wilbur and Ailes Files, Frank A. Vanderlip Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.

¹² Vanderlip to George E. Roberts, Dec. 23, 1907, *ibid.*; Aldrich to Morgan (typed copy of telegram), Aug. 5, 1909, Albert J. Beveridge Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

¹³ For a good discussion of this transition, see Mowry, *Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, 115-40.

¹⁴ Metcalf to Garfield, Jan. 28, 1905, File 42395, Records of the Department of Commerce, National Archives. A House resolution that day had called for the investigation.

to the offices of Elbert Gary, chairman of the corporation's board, to discuss the matter. Gary used this opportunity to open negotiations for a general understanding with the executive. Through Garfield, always cordial to Morgan's men, Gary arranged a personal conference with Roosevelt.¹⁵

On the evening of November 2, 1905, Gary and an assistant met with Roosevelt, Metcalf, and Garfield at the White House. Gary stated "that [United States Steel] does not raise the question of the constitutionality of the law [empowering the Bureau of Corporations to investigate]; it desires to co-operate with the Government in every possible way that is consistent with the proper protection of . . . [the stockholders'] rights and property."¹⁶ He promised to open all books and records of the corporation to the Bureau's investigators. In return for this cooperation, Gary asked that the information gleaned from the files be used "by the President alone for his guidance in making such suggestions to Congress concerning legislation as might be proper, expedient, and for the actual benefit of the general public"; and that "any questions relative to the use, publication, and disposition of material which Judge Gary might deem confidential would be considered by him and Commissioner Garfield, and that if there should be a disagreement between them the matter should be referred to Secretary Metcalf and, if necessary, ultimately to the President for determination."¹⁷ Gary and Roosevelt read a memorandum of the conference and seemed satisfied. Gary's first gentlemen's agreement with the administration was consummated.

On December 18, 1906, Oscar S. Straus, then Secretary of Commerce and Labor, directed the Bureau to investigate the International Harvester Company.¹⁸ The Morgan interests were almost as involved in this company as in United States Steel: Perkins had been instrumental in organizing it, and Gary owned a large bloc of its stock.¹⁹ This time the Wall Street leaders had prepared in advance. On December 8 the board of directors of International Harvester had authorized government investigators full access to its files.²⁰

¹⁵ Garfield to Z. Lewis Dalby, Sept. 20, 1905, File 3641, Records of the Federal Trade Commission, National Archives (hereafter cited as Records FTC); Garfield to Gary, Oct. 27, 1905, File 2604-1-1, *ibid.* See also Garfield to Perkins, Dec. 24, 1904, Perkins Papers.

¹⁶ White House Conference, Nov. 2, 1905, File 2605, Records FTC.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* When Roosevelt brought up the subject of overcapitalization, Gary replied that, if the Bureau believed United States Steel guilty after its study, it should say so and "the Steel Corporation could not be punished in any more severe way than by such publicity." *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Straus to Garfield, Dec. 18, 1906, File 64606, Records Commerce Department. A Senate resolution of December 17 asked for the study.

¹⁹ Memorandum, agreement among George W. Perkins, Elbert H. Gary, John P. Wilson, and Cyrus H. McCormick, Oct. 29, 1906, File 4921-23, Records FTC. For duplication between United States Steel and International Harvester officials, see House Committee on Investigation of United States Steel Corporation, *United States Steel Corporation, Hearings*, July 26, 1911, pt. 12, p. 802.

²⁰ Memorandum, Aug. 23, 1907, File 4902-1, Records FTC.

Then, as soon as news of the investigation broke, Perkins and Cyrus H. McCormick, Harvester's president, wrote to the Department suggesting "a personal conference on the subject."²¹ With a precedent established, it was not necessary to see Roosevelt. On January 18, 1907, Garfield and Deputy Commissioner of Corporations Herbert Knox Smith came to Gary's Waldorf-Astoria suite in New York for a two-day conference with representatives from International Harvester.²² Morgan's men were meeting Roosevelt's men in order to arrange matters.

Gary praised the administration in the language of the contented customer. United States Steel "had been absolutely satisfied with the treatment it had received from the Bureau," and he hoped "that the Harvester Company would receive the same treatment."²³ In the hands of Roosevelt and the Bureau's staff, Gary said, federal supervision became "a strong safeguard . . . to the prevention of violent attacks on private rights in general that might otherwise come."²⁴ On that pleasant note, the negotiators completed a second gentlemen's agreement, identical with the one concerning United States Steel.

During these years the Morgan men watched other corporations run afoul of the administration. A few months after the Steel agreement, the Justice Department charged Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company with violations of the antirebate law. Perkins reported to Morgan that as a result of Gary's "wise and vigilant" policies, "we have anticipated a great many questions and situations that might have been unpleasant and . . . [United States Steel] is looked upon in Washington with more favor than perhaps any other one concerned."²⁵ In 1907, when the government began antitrust prosecution of James B. Duke's American Tobacco Company, Perkins again assured Morgan that this was "about the limit to which the Government can go in the direction of trust smashing."²⁶ If some business interests remained vulnerable, the Morgan men felt secure behind their private arrangements with the administration.

Why was Perkins so confident? Ostensibly these agreements covered only procedural details for two government investigations, with special emphasis upon protecting the corporations' trade secrets. The answer lay in a Wall Street assumption that, in community of interest understandings, the actual words spoken carried certain automatic implications. Perkins and Gary later

²¹ Perkins to Straus, Dec. 18, 1906; McCormick to Garfield, Dec. 28, 1906, in File 4902-2, *ibid.*

²² Memorandum of First International Harvester Conference, Jan. 18, 1907, File 4902-1, *ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Memorandum of Second International Harvester Interview, Jan. 19, 1907, *ibid.*

²⁵ Perkins to Morgan, June 25, 1906, Perkins Papers.

²⁶ Perkins to Morgan, July 12, 1907, *ibid.*

spelled these out. In August 1907 Roosevelt asked Perkins whether International Harvester would "be satisfied with whatever the findings [of the Bureau's investigation] were? Perkins replied that the company expected "the Department frankly [to] come to us and point out any mistakes or technical violations of any law; then give us a chance to correct them, if we could or would, and that if we did, then we would expect the Attorney General not to bring proceedings. . . ." ²⁷ Perkins cited a precedent. In 1904 International Harvester had asked Secretary of Commerce and Labor George B. Cortelyou to find out whether the company was breaking the law. The Interstate Commerce Commission decided that International Harvester had illegally accepted rebates. Representatives of the company then reached an understanding with Attorney General William H. Moody whereby the company stopped its improper practices and the government in turn forgot the matter. ²⁸

Gary's interpretation matched that of Perkins. In 1911 an agent of the Bureau of Corporations reported Gary's reconstruction of the Steel conference:

Somewhere about 1905, Judge Gary said, he had a talk with President Roosevelt. This talk seems to have been pretty general in terms. In substance, he told the President that he wished to lay before him whatever the Corporation was doing; that if anything were wrong he wished to be advised of it, and the Corporation would change it; and the President replied that this seemed to him a fair proposition. ²⁹

Although nothing in the gentlemen's agreements said so, the magnates pictured them as a buffer between the corporations and the courts. 'The executive would issue private rulings on the corporations' legality and then allow them to avoid suits by cleaning house.

Roosevelt neither accepted nor denied this construction. When Perkins presented his gloss on the International Harvester agreement, Roosevelt evaded the issue. He assured Perkins that the Justice Department would not prosecute until the Attorney General had cleared it with him — a normal

²⁷ Memorandum, Aug. 28, 1907, *ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*; memorandum, Aug. 23, 1907, Records FTC. In the latter memorandum, Perkins' assistant William C. Beer said that "the Government has but to point out in what respect it thinks the Company is not obeying the laws to have them obeyed immediately."

²⁹ Memorandum, interview with E. H. Gary, Oct. 6, 1911, File 1940-1, Records FTC. Needless to say, this résumé does not agree with the official memorandum of the conference. At the time of the agreement, Gary only alluded to his thoughts. He wrote to Garfield (Nov. 10, 1905, File 2605, *ibid.*) that "there has been no disposition on my part to endeavor to bind the Government to any promise or undertaking for the protection of our Corporation," but, he added, Roosevelt certainly did not want to harm the Steel Corporation, or business in general. He repeatedly emphasized the man-to-man character of the agreement. See also second letter to Garfield, Nov. 10, 1905, *ibid.*

procedure — and later promised to postpone all legal action until the Bureau had completed its investigation.³⁰

Despite the evasion, the Morgan men had confidence in the President's intentions. A number of Roosevelt's characteristics justified their faith. The idea of blocs within society came naturally to a politician, and Roosevelt added a personal enjoyment for the game of diplomacy. Respecting the magnates' power and their importance to the Republican party, he wanted peace between Wall Street and Washington. Because he believed so firmly in his own judgment, Roosevelt gladly committed his administration once he had determined that a course of action was right.

Roosevelt, like the Morgan men, was groping for a new definition of the government's relationship with big business. Early in his administration the President had indicated his dissatisfaction with the negativism of the Sherman Act. While he welcomed the popularity of the trust buster, he also made clear his preference for a less destructive law. By 1908 he was cooperating with Wall Street in a drive behind the so-called Hepburn amendments to the Sherman Act, bills drawn up in New York that would give the executive the discretion to distinguish between good and bad trusts.³¹ Four years later, Roosevelt canvassed the nation as a presidential candidate with this idea fundamental to his platform.

Behind these areas of agreement, however, lay a distinct difference between the President and the magnates. Wall Street initially regarded the government as a mediocre power and at no time recognized it as more than an equal. From the beginning Roosevelt had considered the government above the nation's private groups.³² Under the gentlemen's agreements he expected the government — in this case, Roosevelt — to have a free hand in making all final decisions. This conviction showed first in the corrections Roosevelt made when he reviewed the original memorandum of the United States Steel agreement. Where the copy read, "That the general business conditions of the country would naturally be damaged if our Corporation were injured; that it was not intended to take any unnecessary action which would be calculated to be injurious . . .," Roosevelt changed the latter part to read, "that it was not intended to take any action which would be

³⁰ Memoranda, Aug. 28 and Nov. 7, 1907, in Perkins Papers.

³¹ The magnates continued to campaign for a federal agency that would regularize the executive cooperation they tried to achieve through the gentlemen's agreements. See Robert H. Wiebe, "Business Disunity and the Progressive Movement, 1901-1914," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIV (Mar. 1958), 681-84.

³² The Progressive party platform in 1912 indicated that by this time Roosevelt's concept of the government as a dispenser of justice had matured. George Perkins, who worked so closely with Roosevelt in the campaign, had apparently accepted Roosevelt's view that the government was a power superior to the corporations.

calculated to be injurious unless it was shown to be the Government's clear duty to take it. . . ."³³ Roosevelt's equivocal answer to Perkins in August 1907 implied the same desire to judge as he saw fit.

In this light the most important development of the agreements under Roosevelt, the Tennessee Coal and Iron episode, represented a defeat for the President. The Morgan men regarded the understandings as the foundation for general cooperation with the executive, upon which they would build as new situations arose. When, during the Panic of 1907, the House of Morgan planned to purchase the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, it naturally sent Gary and Frick to sound out Roosevelt first. The very heart of the agreements, as Gary and Perkins construed them, involved an advance executive ruling to safeguard against later court action. For the House of Morgan, Roosevelt's approval logically extended the existing agreements. But Roosevelt suffered a reverse. Caught in a politically and economically dangerous panic he did not understand, he allowed the Morgan men to assume the initiative and thereby lost control over the agreements.³⁴

Otherwise relations between the magnates and Washington were cordial and uneventful during the last Roosevelt years, partly because the Bureau of Corporations did little investigating. The new Commissioner Herbert Knox Smith repeatedly showed his friendliness toward the magnates. Seconded by Secretary Straus, he offered to publicize International Harvester's cooperative attitude toward the Bureau's investigation.³⁵ When Attorney General

³³ Copy in second letter Gary to Garfield, Nov. 10, 1905, Records FTC. For another example of Roosevelt's differences with the House of Morgan over the proper function of government, see Mowry, *Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, 217.

³⁴ For comments on the meeting by two participants, see Gary to Elihu Root, Nov. 7, 1907, and Root to Gary, Nov. 11, 1907, both in Elihu Root Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Gary's letter includes veiled references to the United States Steel agreement. Gary later claimed that early in the panic he had also requested executive approval for his plan to stabilize prices throughout the iron and steel industry and that Roosevelt had raised no objections (Memorandum of interview with E. H. Gary, Oct. 6, 1911, File 1940-1, Records FTC). Thus Gary considered his famous "dinners" as well as the purchase of Tennessee Coal and Iron a part of the expanding Steel agreement. Perhaps encouraged by success, Frick wrote to Roosevelt (Nov. 30, 1907, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress) offering his and Gary's services as mediators in the court battles between the government and Standard Oil. The bloc approach to government had many applications.

Emphasizing the executive's retreat during the financial crisis, Secretary of the Treasury George B. Cortelyou turned over to the House of Morgan government funds which the bankers used at their discretion to fight the panic. See Cortelyou's later testimony in the House subcommittee of the Committee on Banking and Currency (62 Cong. 3 sess., May 16, 1912-Feb. 26, 1913), *Money Trust Investigation, Investigation of Financial and Monetary Conditions in the United States under House Resolutions Nos. 429 and 504* (3 vols., Washington, D.C., 1912-13), June 13, 1912, I, 430-54.

³⁵ Smith to McCormick, Aug. 8, 1907, Perkins Papers; Straus to Redfield Proctor, Jan. 25, 1908, File 64606, Records Commerce Department.

Charles J. Bonaparte made threatening gestures toward International Harvester, it was Smith who extracted Roosevelt's promise to withhold any prosecution until the Bureau had finished investigating.³⁶ At the same time he confided in Harvester's chief counsel that all available evidence pointed toward the company's legality.³⁷ Roosevelt, seemingly convinced that United States Steel and International Harvester were good corporations, did not press the Bureau for action.

Left in peace, the Morgan men responded in kind. Perkins chatted often with Roosevelt and always found him congenial.³⁸ In March 1907, when other businessmen were blaming Roosevelt for an unsettled stock market, Gary wrote the President a letter flattering his reform record.³⁹ Only once did Gary experience a moment of doubt. In January 1909 Roosevelt turned over nonconfidential data from the Steel investigation to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Although the Bureau dutifully sent Gary a list of the documents divulged, Gary felt impelled "to call the attention . . . of Commissioner Smith to original correspondence between Secretary Garfield and myself. I hope our understanding will not be overlooked." Smith assured Gary that "we have in mind the matter of which you speak," and the incident passed.⁴⁰

When Roosevelt selected William Howard Taft as his heir, Wall Street applauded;⁴¹ he appeared far safer than Roosevelt. Asked during the 1908 campaign whether he anticipated any action against United States Steel, Taft replied that he saw no reason for an investigation, and added, "Indeed, Secretary Garfield tells me there is not [any reason for one]."⁴² The candidate did not even know that the Steel Corporation, along with International Harvester, was already under investigation. Taft's victory, coinciding with

³⁶ Memorandum, Nov. 7, 1907, Perkins Papers. See also Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft: A Biography* (2 vols., New York, 1939), II, 790-91.

³⁷ Edgar A. Bancroft to Perkins, Feb. 4, 1908, Perkins Papers. See also Perkins to Smith, Apr. 18, 1908, File 5589, Records FTC; Smith to Perkins, Apr. 20, 1908, Perkins Papers.

³⁸ Perkins to Morgan, July 31, 1908, Perkins Papers. See also Perkins to Roosevelt, June 10, 1908, *ibid.*

³⁹ Gary to Roosevelt, Mar. 15, 1907, Roosevelt Papers.

⁴⁰ William H. Baldwin to Gary, Jan. 30, 1909; Gary to Baldwin, Feb. 1, 1909; Baldwin to Gary, Feb. 2, 1909; Gary to Baldwin, Feb. 4, 1909; Baldwin to Gary, Feb. 5, 1909; all in File 6296, Records FTC. Later, when the Stanley Committee asked Gary if he knew whether the President had received any information from the Bureau of Corporation's investigation of United States Steel, Gary disingenuously replied, "I have no knowledge as to whether or not the Department of Commerce and Labor has furnished any of this information to the President. There is no way I could know that." House Committee on Investigation of United States Steel Corporation, *United States Steel Corporation, Hearings*, June 1, 1911, pt. 2, p. 71. See also *ibid.*, June 2, 1911, pt. 3, p. 139; July 20, 1911, pt. 9, pp. 495-98.

⁴¹ Pringle, *Taft*, I, 347, 355.

⁴² Quoted in Mowry, *Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, 288. The remark indicates that, if Taft reported him correctly, Garfield discounted the investigations as a formality.

court decisions favorable to big business, made the Morgan men certain that their agreements with the executive were secure.⁴³

The House of Morgan, in company with much of the nation, misjudged the new President. The agreements, in order to function properly, required a strong President whose word bound his administration. Taft was a follower who diffused responsibility among his subordinates and relied upon them for much of his policy. The agreements, as the Morgan men understood them, also depended upon a pragmatic executive, willing to bend them to fit any new developments. Where Roosevelt enjoyed the leeway of private negotiations, Taft's administration lacked the necessary flexibility. Taft's mind worked in legal channels, and in revamping the cabinet he surrounded himself with lawyers who shared his outlook. Finally, the magnates needed a President who, like Roosevelt, could accept big business as a positive good for America. Neither Taft nor Attorney General George W. Wickersham qualified. Both men believed that the dissolution of overlarge corporations would bring back old-time competition. For Taft, who wanted to continue Roosevelt's progressivism by administering rather than innovating, the trust issue proved a godsend. With Wickersham showing the way, the government mined the Sherman Act for all it was worth.⁴⁴

In Roosevelt's last years a Department of Commerce and Labor sympathetic to Wall Street had counterbalanced the aggressive Attorney General Charles Bonaparte. Under Taft, Secretary Charles Nagel gave the Justice Department every possible assistance. When Nagel discovered that the Steel investigation had lagged under Roosevelt and that the International Harvester study had scarcely begun, he immediately concentrated the Department's energies on those two projects.⁴⁵ Bypassing Commissioner of Corporations Herbert Knox Smith, a confirmed friend of the Morgan men, Nagel relied upon a pair of Smith's subordinates, who distrusted Gary's motives, to manage the investigations.⁴⁶ Contrary to his predecessor's policy, Nagel never insisted that the Justice Department wait for a completed investigation before prosecuting. At the same time that he placed his Department at the service of the Attorney General, Nagel turned his back on Wall Street and, by silencing Smith, cut off the magnates' main source of unofficial information.⁴⁷

⁴³ For comments on the courts, see Perkins to J. P. Morgan, Jr., Nov. 10, 1908, Perkins Papers.

⁴⁴ Mowry, *Era of Theodore Roosevelt*, 231-38; and Pringle, *Taft*, I, 248, 523; II, 604-606, 655-59, 669-73, 718 ff., contain suggestive information on Taft and the nature of his administration.

⁴⁵ Memorandum, Aug. 22, 1912, File 64606, Records Commerce Department.

⁴⁶ William H. Baldwin to Garfield, Nov. 28, Dec. 3, 1906, File 3641, Records FTC; Luther Conant, Jr., to Smith, Dec. 25, 1908, File 2604-1-1, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Perkins to Smith, July 3, 1911, File 4902-2, *ibid.*; Smith to Perkins, July 8, 1911, Perkins Papers.

Commissioner Smith was an anachronism in the new administration. As the only participant in the original agreements still in office, he did his best to keep them operative. He prodded Nagel to destroy copies of confidential data that the Bureau had used in its investigations and reminded his superiors of the corporations' cooperativeness. Citing Roosevelt, he tried to delay antitrust suits until the Bureau had completed its studies.⁴⁸ But he cried into the wind. Although he remained in office until 1912, he wielded no power. Taft and Nagel privately rejoiced when Smith resigned to join Roosevelt's Progressive party.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the Morgan men could only await developments. When the Supreme Court in May 1911 ruled that the Standard Oil and American Tobacco Companies violated the Sherman Act, the magnates read the decisions as an invitation to Wickersham and Taft to try their luck with United States Steel and International Harvester.⁵⁰ Hearing rumors of imminent prosecutions, Perkins went to Wickersham in July 1911 to revitalize the agreements. He promised Wickersham that if the Justice Department uncovered any practices which "in his judgment, should be corrected, we would all meet him half way in an effort to [correct them] by agreement rather than through a suit."⁵¹ The magnates had come full circle: Perkins' offer exactly matched the one made to Attorney General Moody seven years earlier. But what had made sense in 1904 no longer applied in 1911. Wickersham answered Perkins on October 26 when the Justice Department, without waiting for the Bureau to finish its study, began antitrust proceedings against United States Steel.

The next day Gary sadly but firmly told the Bureau's agents that United States Steel could no longer cooperate in their investigations.⁵² The corporation's attorneys received no more satisfaction from the Taft administration. When they asked the government to respect the confidential information it had at its disposal, Nagel told them they would "have to trust him to use it discreetly and to publish only what [was] necessary," and Taft added, "That is right."⁵³ Shortly afterward, the Justice Department brought suit against

⁴⁸ Smith to Nagel, June 30, Oct. 27, 1910, and Conant to Nagel, Nov. 1, 1910, in File 69445. Records Commerce Department; Smith to Taft, Apr. 28, 1912, File 64606, *ibid*. See also E. A. Bancroft to Smith, Nov. 6, 1909, and Smith to Bancroft, Nov. 12, 1909, in File 6419, Records FTC.

⁴⁹ Taft to Nagel, July 17, 1912, File 64606, Records Commerce Department.

⁵⁰ Memorandum for Mr. Roosevelt, Mar. 11, 1912, Perkins Papers, shows Perkins' distaste, shared by other men from Wall Street, for the Supreme Court's so-called rule of reason, distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable restraint of trade.

⁵¹ Memorandum, July 13, 1911, Perkins Papers.

⁵² Memorandum, conference between Gary and Bureau of Corporations officials, Oct. 27, 1911, 1940-1, Records FTC, includes Gary's emotions.

⁵³ Memorandum, Nov. 29, 1911, Presidential Ser. no. 2, William Howard Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Ironically, the administration's decision still

the International Harvester Company. Again the Bureau had not yet issued its report, and Harvester's attorney worked to the last minute to breathe life into the second gentlemen's agreement. He reminded the Bureau of "the very fair offer" Smith had made to allow the company to correct the report for "any inadvertent errors or [to] present further information on any point upon which I may believe you to have been misinformed."⁵⁴ Despite rebuffs from the new Commissioner of Corporations Luther Conant, Jr., the attorney persisted until Nagel had told him twice that the report's publication could not wait for his proofreading.⁵⁵ The Taft administration left office amid bitter complaints from the prosecuted corporations.⁵⁶

In 1911 Gary called the Steel suit "the irony of Fate."⁵⁷ Considering his misplaced faith in Taft three years before, the judgment sounded reasonable. More accurately, the Steel prosecution, marking the end of one gentlemen's agreement, was the casualty of a transition period. The Wall Street approach to the federal government, as embodied in the agreements, required more abnegation than the progressive era's administrations would accept. It fitted neither Roosevelt's view of a government above society nor Taft's legalistic, administering executive.

Before they collapsed, the gentlemen's agreements gave Wall Street valuable experience. They taught the magnates the importance of adapting their approach to new circumstances. Even before entering the agreements, the Morgan men had made an important concession. By elevating the government from secondary power to a position of equality with the House of Morgan, they extended the executive's domain to include a study of their hitherto sacred records and, in the process, partially recognized the government's right to regulate corporations. This facilitated a later concession to Woodrow Wilson's administration by which the magnates temporarily accepted the government as a superior power with unquestioned rights to regulate business. On that basis, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad arranged private settlements with Attorney General James C. McReynolds that forestalled prosecution.⁵⁸ Moreover, the painful changes from Roosevelt to Taft

followed the letter of the agreement: the Secretary, then the President, arbitrated differences between the Bureau and the Steel Corporation.

⁵⁴ E. A. Bancroft to Luther Conant, Jr., Sept. 10, 1912, File 6419, Records FTC. Just before he resigned, Smith had allowed Gary's rejoinders to be included in the Bureau's report on United States Steel. Memorandum, conference at Gary's office, Oct. 13, 1911, File 1940-1, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Conant to Bancroft, Sept. 18, 1912, File 6419, *ibid.*; Bancroft to Nagel, Feb. 21, 1913; Nagel to Bancroft, Feb. 22, 26, 1913, File 64606, Records Commerce Department.

⁵⁶ Statement of Cyrus H. McCormick, Mar. 2, 1913, File 6963-1, Records FTC.

⁵⁷ Gary to Perkins, Aug. 1, 1911, Perkins Papers. As the date shows, this comment was written just before the government suit began, when prosecution was certain.

⁵⁸ Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917*, The New

to Wilson pointed up the value of continuity in the government's personnel and philosophy to any private understandings. The progressive era's irregular course made the magnates more appreciative of Republican consistency during the 1920's when the business of government always remained business. In defeat, Wall Street was learning.

American Nation Series, ed. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris (New York, 1954), 76 and fn. 56; and a slightly different presentation in Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (Princeton, N.J., 1956), 418-23.

IDEALS AND SELF-INTEREST IN AMERICAN POLITICS

J. Leonard Bates' "Fulfilling American Democracy" is a once-overlightly survey of the conservation movement that will serve to introduce the student to one of the knottiest problems of 20th-century America. No brief essay can do more than Professor Bates (Department of History, University of Illinois) has done here to describe the leading personalities and motivations of the movement. Once one delves beyond the generalities, no simple description is possible.

The article presents the major interpretation of the conservation movement's significance. The theme is that it was essentially a democratic movement and an integral part of progressivism. It shared progressivism's primary concern for greater "governmental interference and regulation in the public interest," and "for honesty and a social conscience in the administration of resources." The general issue, as Mr. Bates tends to pose it, was primarily: Should "the People" receive the benefits of the nation's wealth, or should they go "into the hands of the self-chosen . . . few, largely to forge new shackles for the wrists and ankles of the many." [Bates, quoting W J McGee, a contemporary conservation leader.]

This presentation, however, begs the usual questions: *Which* people were to receive "the benefits"? *What kinds* of regulation would serve "the public interest"? Indeed, how was "public interest" to be defined? It may be relatively easy to discover the "bad guys" where laws were deliberately broken or where natural riches were meanly squandered. It was much harder to decide on a program that would allow the public (entrepreneurs, farmers, consumers, vacationers) to make optimal use of the public domain while maintaining a free market economy and respecting the prerogatives of the various political units of our federal system.

Actually, as S. P. Hays has shown in his brilliant study, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (1959), the objectives of the leading conservationists frequently clashed sharply with "grass-roots" democratic desires. The movement, indeed, arose in the late 19th century not from democratic pressures but from among an elite corps of engineers and physiographic specialists. According to Hays, it was only after the conservationists lost their ally in the White House with Theodore Roosevelt's retirement that the leaders began to seek popular support by attempting to make conservation an issue of "democracy

versus the interests." Conservationists emphasized wise use rather than rapid development of natural resources. Their objectives reflected the emergence of America's economic maturity and the country's growing concern for long-term prospects and stability. Inevitably, they ran head on into opposition in the less highly developed regions of the country where public policy emphasized rapid growth above all other objectives. In these areas, "states' rights" in the shaping of conservation policies won popular support, often confounding conservationists' hopes for regional rather than state-wide programs.

But we still have not fathomed the full complexity of the problem. A large reservoir of good will toward federal controls remains in the western and other underdeveloped regions of the country, primarily because of the comparative ease with which big corporate interests have customarily been able to pressure state legislatures. As Bates points out, much of the impetus for the conservation movement derived from a desire to keep America's resources from falling into the hands of a "monopolistic few." On the other hand, conservationists often discovered that the largest corporations were their best allies for putting into effect specific conservation programs, especially multiple-purpose projects. It was easier to persuade a big corporation to initiate a reform, easier to test a program on a significantly large scale, than to deal with hundreds of small entrepreneurs burdened with tenuous financial commitments. The big corporations, moreover, had the funds to devote to research and improvements for which the rewards might be years away, and their investments were large enough to give them an interest, like that of the nation as a whole, in efficient, long-lasting use of their property.

These are just samples of the problems that conservationists opened up during the progressive era. In addition to Hays, students may find interesting insights in E. R. Richardson, *The Politics of Conservation* (1962), and Bates' own *The Origins of Teapot Dome* (1963). For a stimulating peek into the problem in a later era, see R. G. Tugwell and R. Banfield, "Grass Roots Democracy—Myth or Reality?" *Public Administration Review* (Winter 1950), a review of P. Selznick's brilliant *TVA and the Grass Roots* (1949). The standard work on the general subject, though somewhat dated, is R. M. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain 1776-1936* (1942), now available in paperback.

*Fulfilling American Democracy:
The Conservation Movement, 1907 to 1921*

J. LEONARD BATES

"Conservation," as related to an evolving government policy in the twentieth century, has not been a clearly defined term. For average citizens it has meant in a general way the prevention of waste. For scholars and government administrators it has frequently meant a little more definitely the careful management of natural resources. Herbert Hoover as food administrator in World War I and as secretary of commerce in the early 1920's helped to popularize such a concept, with emphasis on efficiency of use.¹ There is much to be said for this construction. The acceptance of conservation in a broad sense represents a considerable advance from the nineteenth century when with a few notable exceptions squandering of public and private resources went on recklessly and often cynically. Moreover, its acceptance was a tribute to a group of men whose concept of official responsibility for conservation was not a loose, vague theory, nor a matter of efficiency as such, but a fighting, democratic faith.

Historians of modern reform have given scant attention to a rationale of conservation or to conservation as a democratic movement.² In fact the program associated with Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot is occasionally disparaged as largely sound and fury. Doubtless the ambiguity and complexity of "conservation" have tended to obscure its democratic implications. Then too, this policy was both a product of and a stimulant to

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¹ Herbert Hoover, *Memoirs: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920* (New York, 1951): 244 and *passim*; Mark Sullivan to Philip P. Wells, September 30, 1926, and Wells to Sullivan, October 26, 1926, Gifford Pinchot Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress), Box 1676; Herbert Hoover, "The Part of the Federal and State Authorities in Promoting the Interstate Electric Super-Power Project," Address of October 13, 1923, *Economic World* (New York), XXVI (October 20, 1923), 544-46.

I am indebted to the Social Science Research Council and to the University of Illinois for grants in aid of research; also to Robert M. Albert of the University of Illinois for assistance in research and for helpful insights.

² See George E. Mowry, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* (Madison, 1946); Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1954); Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny* (New York, 1952); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955).

the larger, so-called Progressive Movement; it shared in certain weaknesses of this epoch of reform and has shared in the criticism. The usual interpretation today is that the Progressive Movement was essentially an uprising of the middle class, protesting against monopoly and boss control of politics, stressing heavily the virtues of competition, freedom, and morality.³ With respect to conservation this view leads to the criticism that there existed a fundamental inconsistency between the ideas of protecting natural resources and the dominant beliefs in individualism and competition with the resultant low prices, heavy consumption, and waste.⁴

There was another side to the Progressive Movement — perhaps the most significant side: the decline of laissez faire, the development of a social conscience, the repudiation of Social Darwinism. Most leaders of progressivism believed in a positive state. Some came to believe in the sort of factory and social legislation, welfare action, utility regulation, and limited government ownership that is associated with the New Deal. A few wished to go farther than the New Deal ever went.⁵ While the conservationists, like others progressively inclined, differed among themselves, nevertheless they had a program which may be described as limited socialism in the public interest. Influenced by Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Lester Ward, William James, Arthur Twining Hadley, Thorstein Veblen, Charles A. Beard, and others, these protectors of the public lands were far removed from classical economics.

The organized conservationists were concerned more with economic justice and democracy in the handling of resources than with mere prevention of waste. One aspect of the matter was the price and income situation, the actual monetary rewards from the marvelous wealth of this land. Conservationists believed that somehow the common heritage, the socially created resources and institutions, had passed into the hands of vested interests and that the benefits were siphoned into the hands of a few. There were several ways in which this situation might be remedied, as they saw it: first, to hold on to the remaining public lands, at least temporarily, preventing further

³ See for example George E. Mowry, "The California Progressive and His Rationale: A Study in Middle Class Politics," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids), XXXVI (September, 1949), 239-50; Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, 143-48.

⁴ Erich W. Zimmermann, *World Resources and Industries* (New York, 1933), 786-87, 789, and *passim*; Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, 6, 93, and *passim*.

⁵ Walter E. Weyl, *The New Democracy* (New York, 1914), 160-62, 320-23; Link, *Wilson and the Progressive Era*, 224 ff.; Mowry, *Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement*, 380-81. See also letters of Harry A. Slattery, one of those closely associated with Gifford Pinchot: for example a "platform" written by Slattery for the Committee of Forty-eight, August, 1919, in Pinchot Papers, Box 1860. The Socialist party, which in 1912 received 5.97 per cent of the total vote, had a considerable influence on the left wing of the progressives. See David A. Shannon, "The Socialist Party before the First World War: An Analysis," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* XXXVIII (September, 1951), 279.

monopolization; second, to attempt to give the people a fuller share of opportunities and profits; and finally, in that period of low income to keep prices proportionately low. The monopolists who jacked up prices were anathema, even though their methods might contribute to conservation by reducing consumption. Conservation through penalizing the public was something which democratically motivated leaders were not prepared to accept.

The conservationists' approach was broad. They believed in government studies and safeguards for the preservation of irreplaceable resources such as petroleum; they recognized and struggled with problems which remain today only partially solved. They understood the need for federal leadership in an organic structure based on the unity of nature itself. As early as 1910 Gifford Pinchot proclaimed, "Every river is a unit from its source to its mouth."⁶ They made mistakes, of course. Like most progressives, they concluded easily that the opposition on a particular issue consisted of "robber barons," conspirators, and frauds. Yet at times they were capable of a surprising detachment; a key conservationist, for example, referred admiringly to a "very scholarly and fine" argument that the public domain should be turned over to the states.⁷

In a sense the conservation movement was a nonpartisan, statesmanlike cause, winning support from scientists, politicians, and others all over the country. But a fact of long-range significance was its Republican origin; Republicans led by Pinchot and Roosevelt were the main inspiration of this program. These men were proud of their work, many of them almost fanatically devoted to Roosevelt. They did not easily dissociate the Republican party or the "Republican Roosevelt," who had first given them their chance,⁸ from the body of their accomplishments. Politics and personalities help appreciably to explain the conservation fight from 1907 to 1921.

In tracing the growth of a new attitude toward public resources it would be inaccurate to give credit only to the Republicans. This enlightenment was evolutionary, like reform in general, and Grover Cleveland, William

⁶ Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation* (New York, 1910), 54, 110-13; Wells to Max W. Ball, July 25, 1917 (copy), and Wells memorandum for Pinchot at the bottom of above letter, with respect to enclosure, Max W. Ball, "Memorandum for the Director [Geological Survey]," March 30, 1916, concerning a mineral leasing bill; also Wells to Slattery, August 16, 1917, all in Pinchot Papers. J. O. Richardson, "Naval Petroleum Reserves No. 1 and No. 2," *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute* (Annapolis), XLII (January-February, 1916), 94-97; Irvine L. Lenroot in *Cong. Record*, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 4111-12 (August 21, 1919), and Robert M. La Follette, *ibid.*, 4733-36 (September 3, 1919); Henry S. Graves, "Public Welfare in Relation to the Conservation of Natural Resources," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Philadelphia), CV (January, 1923), 11-12.

⁷ Slattery to Pinchot, October 7, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1842.

⁸ John M. Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt* (Cambridge, 1954), is discerningly appreciative of Roosevelt's inspirational qualities.

A. J. Sparks as land commissioner, Hoke Smith as secretary of the interior, and other Democrats in later years made important contributions.⁹ Even so, the concern here is with the full-fledged movement to which was given in 1907 the name "conservation." There is no doubt that progressive Republicans were the main actors.

Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, United States senator, 1899-1911, a Republican and a progressive, was among those who witnessed the beginnings of the conservation policy. In 1921 he wrote to Gifford Pinchot:

So, time, and time, and time again I thought of you, and the notable work you began more than twenty years ago, and have steadily pursued ever since, to save the country's woodland resources; and it suggested to me again your magnificent statesmanship known as the Conservation policy. For it is statesmanship, real statesmanship of the highest order. You may recall that after breakfast at your house, when you had developed your idea and before you presented it to President Roosevelt, you outlined it to me, and I said to you that forenoon that it was the biggest piece of constructive statesmanship that I had run across. . . . The whole Conservation system is yours, dear Gifford. I honestly think that you have done more than any other man for the future well-being of the Republic; and I have said this publicly as well as privately on every appropriate occasion — and I intend to go on saying it.¹⁰

Pinchot remembered "with keen interest and satisfaction" the beginnings of this movement as described by Beveridge, and in 1937 he recalled further: "The idea was so new that it did not even have a name. Of course it had to have a name. Our little inside group discussed it a great deal. Finally Overton Price suggested that we should call it 'conservation' and the President said 'O. K.' So we called it the conservation movement."¹¹

Allowing for exaggeration on the part of Pinchot and his friends, it is doubtless true that he and Roosevelt inspired this movement.¹² Gifford Pinchot, the son of a Pennsylvania landowner, businessman, philanthropist, and patron of the arts, was stimulated to an early interest in forestry. His father, James W. Pinchot, recommended forestry as a profession, having seen it

⁹ An interesting inquiry is Gifford Pinchot, "How Conservation Began," *Agricultural History* (Washington), XI (October, 1937), 255-65.

¹⁰ Albert J. Beveridge to Pinchot, September 2, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 236.

¹¹ Pinchot to Beveridge, September 8, 1921, *ibid.*, and Pinchot, "How Conservation Began," *Agricultural History*, XI (October, 1937), 262-63.

¹² In opening the White House Conference of Governors (May 13, 1908), Theodore Roosevelt declared: "Especial credit is due to the initiative, the energy, the devotion to duty, and farsightedness of Gifford Pinchot, to whom we owe so much of the progress we have already made in handling this matter of the coordination and conservation of natural resources. If it had not been for him this convention neither would nor could have been called." Newton C. Blanchard *et al.* (eds.), *Proceedings of a Conference of Governors in the White House* (2 vols., Washington; 1909), I, 10.

practiced in Europe but not in this country. The young Pinchot was captivated by the idea. Finding no genuine forestry course in the United States after his graduation from Yale in 1889, he went to Europe to study. On returning, he became forester at George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate, near Asheville, North Carolina.¹³ In 1896 he was appointed to the National Forest Commission and assigned the task of surveying United States forest resources. His reputation now established, in 1898 he became "forester" of the Forest Division (later the Forest Service) in the Agriculture Department, the position he held while in government service. Pinchot had boundless energy and enthusiasm; "tree mad" some had called him at Yale. Although not a systematic thinker, and sometimes annoyingly platitudinous, he possessed unusual qualities of intellect, character, and leadership. He was cultured and receptive to ideas. He was an aristocrat devoting himself to public service, passionately concerned about economic injustice — a fighter, a likable fellow, a good companion. Former Congressman William Kent of California referred in 1923 to one of Pinchot's best qualities, his "inherent modesty" and "desire to work in harmony with others."¹⁴

Pinchot owed much to older men who pioneered in the scientific study of resources, and whose influence was personal and forceful; notably John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) and W. J. McGee (1853-1912). Powell is well remembered as a naturalist, explorer of the Grand Canyon, director of the United States Bureau of Ethnology, and director of the Geological Survey. McGee, a remarkably versatile and influential man, had a fascinating career as anthropologist, geologist, ethnologist, hydrologist, inventor, philosopher, author, and public servant. He was in the Geological Survey while Powell was its head, later headed the Bureau of Ethnology (1893-1903), and then went on to hold numerous posts of importance. While director of the St. Louis Public Museum, he was among those in 1907 who instigated a study of inland waterways and thereby called attention to the physiology of natural resources — water, land, plants, and their interrelationships.¹⁵ Roosevelt promptly appointed him to the Inland Waterways Commission. While at Memphis, during a tour of the Mississippi River, McGee, Pinchot, and others made up their minds that the President ought to call a conference;

¹³ Pinchot, "How Conservation Began," *Agricultural History*, XI (October, 1937), 261. For a good sketch of James W. Pinchot see Joseph A. Arnold, "James Wallace Pinchot," *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture*, 1907 (Washington, 1908), 495-97.

¹⁴ William Kent to Pinchot, March 19, 1923, Pinchot Papers, Box 249. See also Roy M. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage* (Princeton, 1942), 337.

¹⁵ Whitney R. Cross, "W. J. McGee and the Idea of Conservation," *Historian* (Bloomington, Ind.), XV (Spring, 1953), 148-62; Charles R. Van Hise, *The Conservation of Natural Resources in the United States* (New York, 1913), 5; William C. Darrah, *Powell of the Colorado* (Princeton, 1951), 398-400 and *passim*.

in this way they could dramatize their ideas and objectives. Thus the famous White House Conference; and, as Pinchot said, "the fight was on."¹⁶

Prior to this conference Pinchot's Forest Service already had been fighting effectively for some of the principles of unified resource management: for a sustained yield in the national forest lands; for grazing within the forest areas on payment of a fee; for leasing of water power sites, rather than giving them up permanently to private control. In other ways as well the activities of the Forest Service were expanded; not the least influential was a skillful, vigorously conducted publicity campaign.¹⁷

It was not accidental that many of the leaders associated with Pinchot after 1908 were lawyers. There were for instance James R. Garfield, son of the former president, and Walter L. Fisher of Chicago. Garfield served the Roosevelt administration first in the Department of Commerce and Labor and in 1907 became secretary of the interior, doing much to establish the conservation system. Fisher succeeded Richard A. Ballinger as secretary of the interior during the Taft administration and moved within the inner circle of conservationists.¹⁸ Other lawyers of importance were Philip P. Wells, George W. Woodruff, and Harry A. Slattery. These three in particular were experts in their understanding of knotty legal problems that arose from land withdrawals and impending legislation. Conservation was entering a phase by 1910 in which legal minds grappled over words and phrases or over decisions of almost appalling magnitude. Its opponents had been able to retain the finest advice; but with expert legal talent now arrayed in its support, no longer, as in the past, would the public wealth go by default.¹⁹

Philip Wells and George Woodruff, like Pinchot, were graduated in the Yale class of 1889. Wells was a man of unusual attainments. After taking the bachelor's degree he went ahead to do graduate work at Yale in economics and history, and in 1900 he received his Ph.D. Not satisfied with this, he had begun the study of law at Yale and continued at Columbian (later George Washington) University in Washington, D.C. His career for a time was centered at Yale as instructor in and librarian of the Law School, as well as a lecturer in history. In 1906 Pinchot brought him to Washington where he served first as chief law officer with the Forest Service and later in the

¹⁶ Pinchot, "How Conservation Began," *Agricultural History*, XI (October, 1937), 263. See also Theodore Roosevelt, *Autobiography* (New York, 1926), 408-409 and *passim*.

¹⁷ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 399-407; Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground* (New York, 1947), 304-305.

¹⁸ "Jim" and Helen Garfield were intimate friends of the Pinchots. See, for example, Pinchot to Garfield, November 9, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 238. On Fisher's appointment, see Mowry, *Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement*, 86.

¹⁹ See Pinchot, *Fight for Conservation*, 25, 90.

same capacity with the Reclamation Service. Both in and out of government he acted as a special adviser to Pinchot. Woodruff was a former Yale football great and a genial and able friend whom Pinchot brought into the Forest Service as his first law officer. He was soon called, however, on a special assignment to the Interior Department as an assistant attorney general. For a few months in 1907 he functioned as acting secretary of the interior. Slattery came later into the Pinchot circle. Good friends and brilliant lawyers, these men worked effectively for the principles of the conservation program.²⁰

After 1909 the rallying point for conservationists became the National Conservation Association, with headquarters in Washington, D.C. This organization grew out of the struggle between the President and Congress over executive authority in appointing commissions. Specifically, a Commission on National Conservation appointed by Roosevelt as a result of the White House Conference undertook an inventory of all resources. Its work was comprehensive and its findings significant; but the Sixtieth Congress consented to publish only a few copies of the report and declared that such executive commissions were unconstitutional. Roosevelt denounced this view, and when President Taft, as his successor, decided in 1909 that Congress perhaps was right and that the Commission should do its work indirectly the forces of Pinchot and Roosevelt decided that action was demanded.²¹ They formed the National Conservation Association, a private body, with Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard, serving briefly as president before being succeeded by Pinchot, with Harry Slattery as secretary,²² and with Philip Wells as one of its counsel. Typical directors in the period 1916-1917 were Jane Addams, Carie Chapman Catt, Samuel Gompers, Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver, and Irvine L. Lenroot of the House of Representatives.²³

The National Conservation Association's effectiveness stemmed in large part from the great abilities of Harry Slattery as executive secretary, with headquarters near the Capitol. According to Roosevelt, the Association had first to prevent bad legislation in order to protect public resources from monopoly control, and second to guide through Congress the best of con-

²⁰ See especially Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 302-304.

²¹ W J McGee, "The Conservation of Natural Resources," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings for the Year 1909-1910* (Cedar Rapids, 1911), 374-75; Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 368-69, 416-17; Pinchot to Howard B. Gill, September 19, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 1846; Van Hise, *Conservation of Natural Resources*, 11-12; *Presidential Addresses and State Papers of William Howard Taft*, March 4, 1909, to March 4, 1910 (New York, 1910), *passim*.

²² Slattery was preceded by Thomas R. Shipp. Pinchot referred to Overton Price, his associate forester, as the mainstay of the National Conservation Association until Price died in 1913. *Breaking New Ground*, 302.

²³ Pinchot Papers, Box 1838.

servation measures. According to McGee, it had become the "legitimate repository and exponent of conservation doctrine, and the accepted leader of the Conservation Movement, more especially in its moral aspect," and Charles R. Van Hise saw it as the propaganda agent of the movement.²⁴ With understandable prejudice, Pinchot reviewed its work in 1921 and concluded that "no other Association has exerted anything like so large an influence in proportion to its membership and expenditures. It had overcome, not once, but many times, the efforts of the greatest lobbies ever assembled in Washington."²⁵ Each of these evaluations was essentially true. Slattery in some respects was better qualified than Pinchot to fight the lobbies, to make the rounds of Congress, to grind out publicity and propaganda, and when necessary to work night and day poring over legislation looking for ambiguities and loopholes, drawing up legislation as he and Wells, or Lenroot, or Senator Robert M. La Follette, or others thought it ought to be.²⁶

A native of South Carolina, Slattery completed his education at Georgetown University and George Washington University and remained in the Washington area. In 1909, still in his early twenties, he became secretary to Pinchot. A short time later he took over the job with the National Conservation Association. Slattery was an informal, amiable sort of person, folksy in his speech but sharp of mind. People liked him and relied upon him. He was informed on history, law, and economics, but most especially on politics and personalities — the Washington scene. Liberal if not radical, he conceived of himself and the Association as the "watchdog" of conservation.²⁷ When Slattery resigned as secretary in 1921 (to remain with the Association as counsel) Pinchot remarked on his "intimate knowledge" of and close contact with Congress. In this, he thought, Slattery stood "alone among the secretaries of associations with headquarters in Washington." And the result had been Slattery's "controlling part" in writing conservation principles of "immense value" into the laws of the land.²⁸ It was a generous

²⁴ Pinchot to Howard B. Gill (quoting Roosevelt), September 19, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 1846; McGee, "Conservation of Natural Resources," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings*, 1909-1910, p. 375; Van Hise, *Conservation of Natural Resources*, 12.

²⁵ Pinchot to Gill, September 19, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 1846.

²⁶ Admiration of Slattery and his work was well-nigh universal among the progressives and conservationists. See Raphael Zon, of the Forest Service, to Pinchot, June 14, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1843, and William Kent to Pinchot, May 18, 1922, *ibid.*, Box 457; also Robert M. La Follette, quoted in Belle C. and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette* (2 vols., New York, 1953), II, 942-43.

²⁷ Slattery to Pinchot, February 28, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 1846.

²⁸ Pinchot to Slattery, April 6, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 242. See also Wells to Slattery, October 31, 1919, *ibid.*, Box 1843. In the early 1920's Slattery played an important part in the oil leasing investigation; in 1933 he joined Harold Ickes as a special assistant; and later he headed the Rural Electrification Administration.

tribute to the kind of man who so often serves the public, with little publicity and no public recognition.

The developing rationale of the conservationists is of the utmost importance in explaining their conduct and influence. By no means were they all alike, but people such as Roosevelt, Pinchot, and La Follette believed that a larger amount of governmental interference and regulation in the public interest was required. They were especially concerned about the remaining public lands, which, according to principles grounded in the Homestead and other acts, belonged to all. Millions of acres had been given away or sold to corporate interests for a trifling price or had been actually stolen. This record of carelessness and exploitation could not be expunged. However, to conserve and use wisely that which remained, to show that civilized man could profit from mistakes of the past, to democratize the handling of a common heritage, would be a genuine consolation. A crisis, they felt, existed. Such an attitude was a compound of idealism, passion, and sober analysis. These men realized that American society in the twentieth century must be increasingly one of co-operative and collective gains.

As progressives they agreed passionately on the need for honesty and a social conscience in the administration of resources. Declared Pinchot in 1910: "There is no hunger like land hunger, and no object for which men are more ready to use unfair and desperate means than the acquisition of land." Americans had to make up their minds whether their political system was to be devoted to "unclean money or free men."²⁹ It was fortunate, he believed, that special interests were afflicted with a "blindness" because of their "wholly commercialized point of view."³⁰ Conservationists were convinced that hostility toward materialism and toward money men and special interests usually was warranted, that history afforded ample justification for suspicion. If nothing else united the conservationists, there was this hatred of the boodler, the rank materialist, the exploiter.

Intellectually there was much that drew these men together. McGee, whom Pinchot called "the scientific brains" of the conservation movement, provided a rationale for action. "Every revolution," said McGee, "whatever its material manifestations . . . is first and foremost a revolution in thought and spirit."³¹ Believing that Americans had largely lost their rights in the land, McGee felt that knowledge of how this had occurred might yet insure the "perpetuity" of the people.

From the early beginnings of the United States there had been confusion

²⁹ Pinchot, *Fight for Conservation*, 92-93.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

³¹ McGee, "Conservation of Natural Resources," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings*, 1909-1910, p. 378. See also Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 359-60.

and carelessness in the administration of "land," a word identified with resources generally: "When Independence was declared and the Constitution was framed, no resources were reckoned except the Men who made the nation and the Land on which they lived."³² Trees were considered an obstacle to be burned or girdled; little attention was paid to natural growth above or minerals below. The "Fathers," filled with their dreams of a freehold citizenry rooted in the soil, proceeded to dissipate values other than the land itself. The results were both good and evil. So far as certain farsighted or favored individuals were concerned, the way was opened to wealth, power, and monopoly. McGee wrote: "the resources passed under monopolistic control with a rapidity never before seen in all the world's history; and it is hardly too much to say that the Nation has become one of the Captains of Industry first, and one of the People and their chosen representatives only second." Moreover, "the free gift" of resources "under the title of land" defeated the original purpose of creating a free independent citizenry. The people had become "industrial dependents."³³ Incidental to this process of resource appropriation was waste.

"Ample resources" remained, it was true, but what was to be done with them? Should the "People," whose work and travail had created this wealth, receive the benefits? Or should they go "into the hands of the self-chosen and self-annointed [*sic*] few, largely to forge new shackles for the wrists and ankles of the many?" Deliberately and thoughtfully, McGee argued, American freemen must proceed "to reclaim their own."³⁴ Theodore Roosevelt's opening address at the White House Conference expounded on the same theme — the right of the people to public wealth and, moreover, their right to control *private* property for the common weal. He quoted the high authority of Justice Holmes, speaking for the Supreme Court with respect to state protection of water, forests, and the atmosphere: "This public interest is omnipresent wherever there is a State, and grows more pressing as population grows." And Roosevelt added emphatically that the dictum was to be carried farther than the forests and the streams.³⁵

McGee's indebtedness to Henry George is obvious. As a product of the exciting generation in which Social Darwinism was elaborated and then

³² McGee, "Conservation of Natural Resources," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings*, 1909-1910, p. 364.

³³ *Ibid.*, 367. Pinchot observed (1910) that the average family income was only \$600, and he showed a deep concern over the "tragedies" resulting from "the lack of a little money." *Fight for Conservation*, 110-13 and *passim*. Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, Chap. I; Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, 1950), 258-60.

³⁴ McGee, "Conservation of Natural Resources," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings*, 1909-1910, pp. 369-70.

³⁵ Blanchard *et al.* (eds.), *Proceedings of Conference of Governors*, I, 10-12.

repudiated, as an associate of such men as John Wesley Powell and Lester Ward, it was not strange that McGee emphasized economic justice. The Bill of Rights must be purified, he said, through equal opportunities and equal rights in the common resources. He stressed the "trinity" of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The keynote was fraternity. There remained to be established "full brotherhood among men and generations."³⁶ Pinchot, advancing similar arguments, thought that the answer lay in the conservation movement, the most democratic that the country had known in a generation.

Philip Wells became more explicit about the ideas and hopes which had driven him and his associates "in the conservation fight." They had been concerned with economic justice and incidentally with waste because if the resources were destroyed nothing remained upon which the principle of justice could operate. In the light of the American system, he said, they conceived of economic justice as meaning that "so far as possible within the general limitations fixed by popular opinion as to fundamentals, and within the specific limitations fixed by constitutional provisions, the 'economic rent,' present and future ('unearned increment') in natural resources should be retained by the public which should also see that the resources are not wasted in order that the benefits of the new policy may be prolonged as far into the future as possible." While at Yale, Wells had studied under William Graham Sumner, who once remarked that every man was either a socialist or an anarchist. Actually, Wells believed, most people were somewhere between these two poles. "Now the conservationists as to specific natural resources (water power, forests, the mineral fuels and mineral fertilizers) inclined to the socializing pole; that is, they sought to enlarge the public control of these resources . . . both for the prevention of waste and, more essential, for the socializing of the raw resource value including unearned increment."³⁷

Wells went ahead to discuss Henry George, "a constructive economist of very high order" rather than a crank, as some maintained, and to compare his philosophy with that of the conservationists. They differed in that George was essentially an individualist, of the "Neo-Manchester School."

³⁶ McGee, "Conservation of Natural Resources," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings*, 1909-1910, pp. 377-79. See also Pinchot, *Fight for Conservation*, 81 and *passim*. Cross, "McGee and the Idea of Conservation," *Historian*, XV (Spring, 1953), 162, concluded that "McGee was largely responsible for conveying the theoretical, positive, social Darwinism of the late nineteenth century into the realm of practical political action in the conservation movement of the twentieth century." It is noteworthy, however, that McGee's own ideas had changed appreciably since 1899. See W J McGee, "National Growth and National Character," *National Geographic Magazine* (Washington), X (June, 1899), 185-206.

³⁷ Wells to Mark Sullivan, September 22, 1926, Pinchot Papers, Box 1676.

They had agreed in "trying to socialize raw resource value," George attempting to do this through his single tax on unearned increments and with slight regard for constitutional problems. The conservationists, on the other hand, were interested primarily in "selected resources exhaustible or subject to great waste, suitable for development only or chiefly by large aggregations of capital and peculiarly open to monopolistic abuse." They differed further as to ideas of management, Wells continued. "The conservationists want to socialize to a certain extent the management of their selected resources (as the Forest Service does in selling standing timber in a National Forest by restrictions imposed on logging methods to secure a new timber crop); whereas George would anarchize the management of all natural resources by turning them over to unrestricted private ownership."³⁸

Pinchot and his group therefore believed in using the authority of federal and state government to compel conservation practices ("socialization of management"), even aiming to do this on *private* forest lands.³⁹ With respect to the alternatives of federal or state action Pinchot once remarked: "I have very little interest in the abstract question whether the nation is encroaching upon the rights of the states or the states upon the nation. Power falls naturally to that person or agency which can and does use it, and . . . the nation acts . . . [while] the states do not."⁴⁰

The influence of these ideas and the impact of the Pinchot organization cannot be minimized. Nevertheless, Pinchot and his friends did not constitute the entire conservation movement. There were issues which inevitably divided the conservationists as a whole: the clashing of personalities and ambitions, disagreement over methods if not over goals, disputes between Democrats and Republicans, and economic sectionalism especially as it arose between the West and the East. Any issue or event could impinge upon conservation with divisive results or with diverse and complicating effects — for example World War I. In general, one accepting the designation of "conservationist" was a progressive, believing in the necessity of strong executive leadership and federal action. He might be a radical or an outright socialist. Frequently, on the other hand, he emphasized as heavily as did President Taft the authority of Congress, the statutory system that must be erected, the quieting of any doubts as to constitutionality.⁴¹ And it

³⁸ *Ibid.* At the top of this copy of the letter is a notation: "GP read and approved this — Sept 23/26."

³⁹ Wells to Sullivan, October 26, 1926, *ibid.* Wells concluded: "I could write a volume to prove and explain Pinchot's policy." As to control of forest lands, see Pinchot to Liberty H. Bailey, June 6, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 236, and Gifford Pinchot, "What About Forestry?" *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia), June 4, 1921, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Statement of August 11, 1924, Pinchot Papers, Box 255.

⁴¹ See, for example, Taft to William Kent, June 29, 1909, quoted in Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft* (2 vols., New York, 1939), I, 480.

was not strange for a conservationist to consider himself a conservative; one who believed in honest government and orderly processes, who hated boodling, who watched vigilantly for the sly steals that special interests might perpetrate. Representative James R. Mann of Illinois, for example, might be linked politically with "Uncle Joe" Cannon's Old Guard, but the Pinchot forces treasured him as one of their most dependable allies.⁴² Regionally speaking, the southerner who favored conservation differed from the northerner or from the westerner. Southerners were much influenced by traditions of agrarianism and anti-monopoly action as well as by the fact (acidly noted by Pinchot) that the lands to be conserved and "saved" were mostly outside their region.⁴³

There was one charge endlessly repeated against the conservationists with the effect of creating cleavages in the ranks. Time and again their foes, or those who called themselves moderate and reasonable conservationists, asserted that the Pinchot policy resolved itself into keeping resources in cold storage, or under lock and key, or hermetically sealed up. They implied or even declared that Pinchot and his adherents had no interest in jobs and opportunities for the people of the West; that they cared nothing for necessary development. Senator Charles S. Thomas (Democrat) of Colorado expressed this point of view in 1919:

The average conservationist — I will not say it applies to all of them — is very much concerned about conserving other people, but when it comes to a personal application of the doctrine he is not so enthusiastic. I believe the gentleman who claims to be the great progenitor, the father of conservation is the Hon. Gifford Pinchot, at one time chief adviser to President Roosevelt, forester of the United States, and one of the founders and leaders of the late lamented Progressive Party. He it was who discovered that the way to conserve was to reserve, and that the way to develop was to keep everything petrified and stagnant. To him, so far as his actions are concerned, the American Indian . . . was the ideal conservationist.⁴⁴

Pinchot, Slattery, and others denied or sought to make light of such accusations and in turn directed much of their criticism against such conserva-

⁴² Slattery to Pinchot, August 21, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1842. See the sketch of Mann in *Dictionary of American Biography* (21 vols., New York, 1928-1944), XII, 244. As a legislator of intellectual force and courage but also of curious contradictions, Mann deserves a careful study.

⁴³ Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 89.

⁴⁴ *Cong. Record*, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 4255-56 (August 23, 1919). See also Representative Sylvester C. Smith of California in *Cong. Record*, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., 5062 (April 20, 1910); Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana to R. S. Hamilton, October 19, 1918, Thomas J. Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Hoover, Address of October 13, 1923, *Economic World*, XXVI (October 20, 1923), 544-46.

tionist ideas and practices as those of Hoover while food administrator and secretary of commerce.⁴⁵ In their own defense they could point to the fact that Pinchot in heading the Forest Service as well as in later years advocated and practiced conservation through use. Nevertheless, it was true that the Roosevelt-Pinchot-Taft withdrawals of land, the study for purposes of classification, and the shaping of new laws meant some delay. How much of this delay was to be charged to them and how much was to be charged to their enemies among state righters and special interests remained an open question.

From 1910 to 1912 two dramatic events had the effect of both quickening the conservation movement and causing its reorientation; and World War I, following shortly, added complications. First, there was the famous Ballinger-Pinchot controversy, in which Pinchot, becoming a critic of the Secretary of the Interior, was fired from his job as chief United States forester. Pinchot and the progressives convinced themselves that President Taft had been a traitor to their cause; that the Secretary of the Interior, Richard A. Ballinger of Seattle, had yielded to the big interests; and that the majority report, after a congressional investigation, was a "whitewash."⁴⁶ Democrats were delighted to echo these charges. It was indeed true that Ballinger had served as private adviser to the same interests that he favored as a government official, and that from 1910 to 1912 he and his counsel seemingly put themselves on record as sworn enemies of conservation. He seems also to have been weak or changeable in the formulation and execution of departmental policies, and in retaining him the President strengthened the suspicions and resentment of the Pinchot group.⁴⁷ Whatever the exact meaning of this affair, many progressives never forgave Taft; nor doubted that Ballinger was in league with the Guggenheims; nor forgot that

⁴⁵ See, for example, Pinchot to Los Angeles *Herald*, April 13, 1920, Pinchot Papers, Box 1941; Pinchot to Mark Sullivan, February 24, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 242; Pinchot to Hoover, November 22, 1923, *ibid.*, Box 1701; and Wells to Sullivan, October 26, 1926, *ibid.*, Box 1676.

⁴⁶ See George W. Norris to Pinchot, March 11, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 240; Pinchot to Harold J. Howland, October 3, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 238; Mowry, *Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement*, 73-87.

⁴⁷ For discussions of some of the reactions to the controversy see Alpheus T. Mason, *Bureaucracy Convicts Itself: The Ballinger-Pinchot Controversy of 1910* (New York, 1941), 178-80 and *passim*, and Mowry, *Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement*, 80 ff. An examination of Ballinger's departmental correspondence as compared with that of Walter L. Fisher, who succeeded him, reveals the weakness of Ballinger's administration. Compare, for example, George Otis Smith (director of the Geological Survey) to Ballinger, December 22, 1910, and Ballinger to Attorney General George W. Wickersham, December 24, 1910, with Charles Hilles to Fisher, March 1, 1913, and Fisher to President Taft, March 1, 1913, Files of the Secretary of the Interior, General Land Office, Oil Lands (National Archives).

such a man as Edwin Denby (later secretary of the navy under Harding) had been among the "whitewashers" in Congress.⁴⁸ And on the other side, Taft was reported as believing that Pinchot was "a socialist and a spiritualist . . . capable of any extreme act."⁴⁹

All of this helped to precipitate the second event, the revolt of Republican progressives, and the formation of the Roosevelt "Bull Moose" party in 1912. As a result of this schism Woodrow Wilson came to the White House, and for the first time a Democratic administration had to cope with twentieth-century problems, including conservation. The relations between Republicans who had inaugurated this policy and the polyglot Democrats who tried more or less to carry it out were well-nigh predictable. Prospects of mutual satisfaction were scant.

In the meantime the Republicans remained seriously divided; and the career of Robert M. La Follette affords an illustration of their confusion during these years. La Follette had led the progressive forces in 1910-1911, had aspired to the Republican nomination for the presidency, and had been dropped by the progressive members of his party because they believed Roosevelt to have a greater dramatic appeal and thus a better chance to win. He felt that he had been betrayed by a number of men such as Pinchot, who initially had promised their support, and as a result he and the Roosevelt men were never to become fully reconciled. In Wisconsin the struggle among Republicans stemming from the split of 1912 brought a break between La Follette and Irvine L. Lenroot. These two had worked closely and cordially from 1900 to 1912, with Lenroot supporting "Fighting Bob's" progressive policies and coming to Washington himself in 1909 as a representative. By 1911 La Follette depended upon Lenroot's support in seeking the presidential nomination; but Lenroot, like most progressives, went over to Roosevelt. The La Follettes were stricken by this defection. Mrs. La Follette wrote to a friend: "Nothing that has happened has been so hard for me. We have managed to keep the personal relation but I realize that Bob and Irvine can never be the same to each other as before."⁵⁰

Each of the two Wisconsinites had a strong record on conservation. But after 1912, increasingly, they went their separate ways, Lenroot becoming an "internationalist," while La Follette was exceedingly critical of Wilson-

⁴⁸ Amos Pinchot to Gifford Pinchot, February 26, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 241. See also Gifford Pinchot to Samuel M. Lindsay, March 6, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 239; Norris to Pinchot, March 11, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 240; Gustavus Pope to Pinchot, March 6, 1924, *ibid.* For an expression of La Follette's contempt for Taft, see *Cong. Record*, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 4747 (September 3, 1919).

⁴⁹ Archie Butt to Clara Butt, April 12, 1910, in *Taft and Roosevelt: The Intimate Letters of Archie Butt, Military Aide* (2 vols., New York, 1930), I, 327-28.

⁵⁰ La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette*, I, 420-24.

ian diplomacy.⁵¹ It was Lenroot who worked closely with the National Conservation Association. As a member of the House Committee on Public Lands he was the more likely to sponsor bills for these organized conservationists; and after transferring to the Senate in 1918 he continued as one of their contact men.⁵² Pinchot and Lenroot on one side and La Follette on the other had not forgotten their differences when Lenroot campaigned in 1920 for re-election to the Senate. Pinchot came to Wisconsin to help. He assailed La Follette as an autocrat who had selfishly refused to follow Roosevelt in the Bull Moose campaign and who now in the same selfish way was doing all he could to block Lenroot's ambitions.⁵³

At the same time, however, the forces of La Follette and Pinchot could work together in February-March, 1919, to defeat the so-called Pittman mineral leasing bill, an anti-conservationist measure which they considered peculiarly obnoxious. On matters of principle, they could unite; but Slattery, Wells, and company of the National Conservation Association took pains not to "get the wires crossed" between La Follette and Lenroot when needing so keenly the help of both.⁵⁴ It was La Follette finally, not Lenroot, who saved them in the petroleum fight, La Follette who argued and filibustered successfully against the mineral leasing bill with materials supplied by the Association.⁵⁵ And two years later it was La Follette, again assisted by Slattery and Wells, who instigated the Teapot Dome investigation.⁵⁶

⁵¹ "Lenroot and La Follette: A Contrast," *Outlook* (New York), CXV (April 18, 1917), 691; Irvine L. Lenroot, "The War Loyalty of Wisconsin," *Forum* (New York), LIX (June, 1918), 699.

⁵² Slattery regretted Lenroot's departure from the House, where his "influence for good" has been so powerful. Slattery to Mrs. Pinchot, September 11, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1841. See also a eulogistic statement in "Suggestions for Sec. of Interior," December 11, 1920, probably written by Slattery, *ibid.*, Box 1941; Wells to Lenroot, May 21, 1919, and Wells to George W. Woodruff, May 22, 1919, *ibid.*, Box 1700; and Slattery to Pinchot, December 4, 1918, *ibid.*, Box 1838. Senator Paul O. Husting (a Democrat), who died in 1917 and was replaced by Lenroot, had also worked closely with the Pinchot group.

⁵³ Address by Pinchot at Racine, Wisconsin, October 25, 1920, *ibid.*, Box 1948.

⁵⁴ Wells to Woodruff, May 22, 1919, and Wells to John J. Hannan (La Follette's assistant), August 20, 1919, *ibid.*, Box 1700.

⁵⁵ See especially National Conservation Association "News Letter on Conservation," March, 1919 (written by Slattery for approval by Pinchot and release to newspapers), *ibid.*, Box 1842, and Wells, "Analysis of Pittman Conference Bill, 1919," *ibid.*, Box 1859. La Follette's speech is in *Cong. Record*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 4713-16 (March 1, 1919) and *passim*.

⁵⁶ See speeches by Robert M. La Follette, Jr., George W. Norris, Basil Manly, and others, at a dinner in honor of Harry Slattery, Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., June 25, 1932, quoted in *Cong. Record*, 72 Cong., 1 Sess., 15456-62 (July 15, 1932). Senator Norris said: "Without such a man [Slattery] to back us up, without such a man to furnish evidence and information and documents, lots of times it would have been physically impossible for us to get results. Without such a man, those who have tried to fight the peoples' causes in the last ten years . . . would nearly always have failed." See also E. C. Finney (first assistant secretary of the interior) to Wells, June 7, 1921, and copy of draft of resolution prepared by Wells for Senator La Follette via Slattery, March

La Follette and Pinchot operated differently, and this was no discredit to either. The Wisconsinite had neither the disposition nor the opportunity for bartering favors with Wilson (after 1916), nor with Harding, Coolidge, and others of the Republican Old Guard. His forte was to attack, to filibuster, to block "giveaways," to tack on remedial amendments, to force concessions, to rally the left wing. With Pinchot it was a different story. In each Congress, in each administration, Pinchot as president of the National Conservation Association would try to place his men, would distribute his propaganda, would try to win support. Just as the special interests lobbied to control or influence policy, so would he. As an additional moderating influence there were without doubt Pinchot's political ambitions. He was available, for instance, for a place in Harding's cabinet, and a conciliatory course was sometimes prudent.⁵⁷ He would agitate from within if possible, or he would attack from without if necessary.

In their proposals for control of public lands, the two men differed only slightly. In La Follette's opinion there had been only one great issue in all of history: a struggle "between labor and those who would control, through slavery in one form or another, the laborers."⁵⁸ Uppermost in his consideration, therefore, was justice for the exploited. With respect to public resources in general, he argued that there must be a policy of continuing public ownership, of leasing where possible, of price controls, and a degree of government operation depending upon the monopoly situation. Basic raw materials, even though privately owned, must sell at a reasonable price and if they did not he advocated government appropriation. Quite early he had called for leasing rather than selling government properties, and in the conservation fight of the late Wilson years he stressed a leasing system for coal and oil and other nonmetalliferous minerals but not without adequate safeguards for democratic development and prevention of waste. He believed, for example, that evidence of collusive bargaining and fixing of prices among the lessees should warrant government cancellation of the lease.⁵⁹ There were some who charged that La Follette hoped actually to destroy the leasing bills and in time to substitute his own "socialistic" schemes.⁶⁰

11, 1922, Pinchot Papers, Box 1700; and Slattery to Pinchot, June 21, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 242.

⁵⁷ See extensive correspondence between Pinchot and Slattery, 1920-1921, in Pinchot Papers, Boxes 1841 and 1846. Slattery and Pinchot had genuine hopes of converting Harding to the conservationist faith. When Pinchot grew discouraged Slattery urged him on. Otherwise, he wrote, "you would not be able to work with Harding at all, and would undo everything you have done." Slattery to Pinchot, February 16, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 1846.

⁵⁸ *Cong. Record*, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 4755-56 (September 3, 1919).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 4715 (March 1, 1919), and 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 4754-58 (September 3, 1919).

⁶⁰ "Interview" given out by Senator Walsh, March 12, 1919, and Walsh to Hattie Grace, March 26, 1919, Walsh Papers. See also Walsh in *Cong. Record*, 66 Cong.,

The coming of a Democratic administration in 1913 produced a reorientation affecting everyone in the fight for conservation. This was due partly to the status of the withdrawal question; nonmetallic mineral lands and water power sites no longer were being sold or given away and had to be made available under some scheme for development. Prior to 1913, Republicans had argued mostly among themselves; they could now sit back and watch the Democrats undertake the direction of policy, and could wait for an appropriate occasion to assail and expose them. Wilson believed in conservation, and the policy of his administration was directed toward formulation of a leasing system.⁶¹ But on the question of how this should be done his own advisers were often in sharp disagreement,⁶² thereby giving the Republicans their opportunity for criticism. In the beginning, La Follette, Pinchot, and many Republicans of a progressive mind were sympathetic to Wilson's program. A few turned against him by 1916;⁶³ many others by 1918; and by 1920 their abandonment was almost complete.

World War I and industrial mobilization were largely responsible for this time of trouble. Of deepest concern to the organized conservationists was this question: How disinterested, how patriotic, were the businessmen who came streaming into Wilson's government for the purpose of preparing the nation for war? In the attitude of conservationists toward dollar-a-year men one finds new evidence that their aims went far beyond the mere prevention of waste. They were concerned with problems of men against money, with profiteering, with economic justice, with maintaining democracy. By these standards Wilson qualified, at the least, as a moderate conservationist. He believed that leasing laws opening western lands to development must be passed; that the war (creating new demands for petroleum and other resources) made a solution most urgent; and that a compromise doing justice to all parties could be effected. Wilson was cautious and showed a wariness

1 Sess., 4112 (August 21, 1919), and La Follette's explanation that his purpose was constructive; that to improve rather than destroy the leasing bill was his aim. *Ibid.*, 4251-52 (August 23, 1919).

⁶¹ For Wilson's views on conservation see his statement of October 7, 1912, quoted in *Cong. Record*, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., 14948 (September 10, 1914), and his Inaugural Address, March 4, 1913; Ray S. Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (6 vols., New York, 1925-1927), III, 1-6. See also Scott Ferris to Wilson, May 27, 1918, and Wilson to Ferris, May 28, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress), Box 505.

⁶² Pinchot, "Open Letter to the Honorable Franklin K. Lane . . . Concerning the Navy's Oil Lands," August 12, 1916, Pinchot Papers; Wilson to Thomas W. Gregory, February 19, 1917, Gregory to Wilson, February 26, 1917, Josephus Daniels to Gregory, February 26, 1917, Gregory to Claude A. Swanson, February 26, 1917, Wilson Papers, Box 505.

⁶³ See Pinchot, "Open Letter to 5,000 Editors," September 7, 1916, and replies, Pinchot Papers, Box 1943.

about the possibility of profiteering and corruption under cloak of war.⁶⁴

Wilson's secretary of the navy, Josephus Daniels, going beyond wariness, was absolutely convinced that the special interests were using the war emergency for purposes of grabbing resources belonging to all the people.⁶⁵ La Follette, Pinchot, and most of the progressive Republicans agreed. Slattery, writing from Washington, expressed the attitude of the National Conservation Association when he referred to that "National Council of Defense outfit." "We have been surrounded with them . . . and I have from the start had my strong suspicions about the whole bunch." Slattery and Gifford Pinchot feared that Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane was "going to give away every thing in sight" before the war had ended, unless they stopped him.⁶⁶ Slattery picturesquely summed up the whole situation: It looked as though "these bushwhacking gentlemen," while good people had their faces turned to the war, were going to "raid the 'smokehouse and hen-roost' as of border-war days."⁶⁷ Slattery and his associates had in mind particular bushwhackers, such as John D. Ryan and C. F. Kelley of the Anaconda Copper Company and Edward L. Doheny of the Pan-American Petroleum Company.⁶⁸

One effect of the southern leadership in the Wilson administration was to stimulate sectional rivalries, with some important effects upon conservation. The western states resisted at first a federal program for the public lands while eastern and southern leaders were forcing the issue. But the native South of Woodrow Wilson differed somewhat from the East of

⁶⁴ Memorandum of Norman Hapgood letter to Wilson, July 31, 1916, Wilson to Gregory, August 2, 1916, and Wilson to Hapgood, August 2, 1916, Wilson Papers, Box 505; Thomas J. Walsh to Wilson, June 22, 1917, and Wilson to Walsh, June 29, 1917, *ibid.*, Box 371.

⁶⁵ See for example Daniels to Wilson, June 20, 1917, Wilson Papers, Box 505; Daniels to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 7, 1943, and January 28, 1944, Josephus Daniels Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress), Box 17.

⁶⁶ Slattery to Amos Pinchot, September 22, 1917, Slattery to Gifford Pinchot, August 16, 1917 (enclosing "Memorandum for the Press," from Department of Interior, July 26, 1917), and Pinchot to Slattery, undated, Pinchot Papers, Box 1838. Slattery had marked portions of Lane's Memorandum to emphasize "giveaways": the rapid classification of lands and restoration to private entry.

⁶⁷ Slattery to Wells, August 3, 1917, *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Slattery to Pinchot, February 28, 1918, Pinchot Papers, Box 1838; Wells to Pinchot, December 6, 1919, *ibid.*, Box 1700; Amos Pinchot to Conference Committee of Senate and House of Representatives, September 18, 1917 (copy), *ibid.*, Box 1859. Some of the official correspondence seemed to indicate a growing cordiality between leaders of government and business. See for example George Otis Smith (director of the Geological Survey) to Ballinger, December 22, 1910, and Smith to Lane, September 4, 1917, Files of the Secretary of the Interior, General Land Office, Oil Lands; statement by Mark Requa of the Fuel Division, September 30, 1918, on the world struggle for oil, and Van H. Manning (director of the Bureau of Mines) to Newton D. Baker (copy, undated, but early 1920), Files of the Secretary of the Interior, Administration General, Oil Situation (National Archives).

Gifford Pinchot. In brief, the East-West division over conservation was accompanied in the Wilson years by a flare-up of North-South animosities. There had been nothing like it since the 1890's, perhaps since Reconstruction. Some applied the term of Reconstruction days, "waving the bloody shirt," to the divisive strategy of Republican politicians, who urged their constituents to vote for Republicans since only in that way could the power of southern Democrats be broken.⁶⁹ To measure the importance of these sectional feelings is difficult, but that they existed and exerted an influence of subtle though powerful proportions is certain.

The organized conservationists from the start had resisted as best they could the regional prejudices that might reduce their influence on policy or disrupt their plans in Congress. Nevertheless, as advocates of a withdrawal policy they had to face entrenched hostility from many western interests. The conservationists were of course convinced that their policies benefited the western people, as distinguished from the big interests. They were correct in asserting, as Pinchot did, that "monopolistic control was infinitely more potent in the West . . . than in the East."⁷⁰ It was in this region of the enterprising pioneer and the free individual that the special interests attained their most ruthless power. The Southern Pacific Railroad, the Standard Oil Company of California, Colorado's corporate interests or "the Beast" (as described by Judge Ben Lindsey), the Phelps Dodge corporation in Arizona, and the Anaconda Copper Company of Montana (Standard Oil) were notorious examples. Edward L. Doheny's Pan-American Petroleum Company and Harry Sinclair's Mammoth Oil Company were worthy inheritors of at least a portion of this tradition — that the United States government was fair game.

The West, however, was always divided. Men like Representative William Kent and Governor George C. Pardee of California, Judge Ben Lindsey of Colorado, Senator John B. Kendrick of Wyoming, and Governor Joseph M. Dixon of Montana were in the conservationist camp. The trend in the Progressive Era was conservationist. Roosevelt's dramatic flair was combined with Pinchot's incessant labors for the cause. It was formidable propaganda for the justice, wisdom, and democracy of the federal government's program. Western senators and representatives, who had been almost unanimous against the land withdrawals, who favored the old policy of gift

⁶⁹ For some of the reactions to southern leadership see A. Maurice Low, "The South in the Saddle," *Harper's Weekly* (New York), February 8, 1913, p. 20; T. J. Hocking in *Helena Montana Record-Herald*, October 16, 1918; Slattery to Pinchot, June 21, 1921, Pinchot Papers, Box 242; Walsh to W. M. Johnston, November 12, 1918, Walsh Papers; and Seward W. Livermore, "The Sectional Issue in the 1918 Congressional Elections," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXV (June, 1948), 29-60.

⁷⁰ Pinchot, "How Conservation Began," *Agricultural History*, XI (October, 1937), 264-65.

and sale, slowly had to recognize the handwriting on the wall. Public sentiment had come to favor the forest reserves, the government retention of mineral areas and water power sites, and an active federal policy. As Senator Walsh of Montana saw the situation in 1919, it was "useless" to declaim against leasing. "Almost every western Senator has protested loud and long and often. It is a condition and not a theory that confronts us." If these lands were to be developed, he concluded, Congressmen had better compromise on a leasing bill.⁷¹ One incentive to compromise was the probability that western states would share handsomely in royalties accruing from federal lands within their borders. To some, compromise seemed in the air; sectionalism seemed on the decline.

Though the West and the South have often been allied in politics, they seldom were allied on conservation policy. Slattery suggested that the South's residue of state-rights feeling accounted for its apparent lack of interest in the support of federal measures to regulate resources,⁷² but as a matter of fact the anti-conservationists got little comfort from below the Mason and Dixon line. Edward T. Taylor, a Democratic representative from Colorado and one of the die-hards opposing conservation, took note of this fact in 1914. Referring to the southern failure to help the West by resisting "carpetbag control" from Washington, Taylor said: "I want to say to my genial friends from the sunny South that during my six years of service in this House I never yet have been able to understand why the members from the Southern states, that had such a long and serious experience in being governed by appointive officials from Washington, controlled by nonresident officers, can not only complacently vote for but work for propositions controlling our western states . . . from Washington."⁷³

Among the Democrats who contributed importantly to the promotion of the Roosevelt-Pinchot program or its continuation under Wilson were such southerners or border-state men as Representatives William B. Craig (Alabama), Scott Ferris (Oklahoma), and Asbury F. Lever (South Carolina), Attorneys General James C. McReynolds (Tennessee) and Thomas W. Gregory (Texas), Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels (North Carolina), and Senator Claude A. Swanson (Virginia).⁷⁴ Some co-operated with

⁷¹ Walsh to Senator Charles B. Henderson (Nevada), September 2, 1919, Walsh Papers. See also Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage*, 394-95.

⁷² Slattery to Pinchot, enclosing "News Letter on Conservation," March 19, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1842.

⁷³ *Cong. Record*, 63 Cong., 2 Sess., 15053 (September 12, 1914). A year later Taylor observed that the "conservation sentiment of the North and of the South" was almost "unanimously" in favor of a federal leasing program. Address at Conference of the Mining Society of America, December 16, 1915, printed in *Senate Docs.*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess. (1916), No. 233, p. 21.

⁷⁴ For comments by Ferris and Craig on early phases of the program, see *Cong. Record*, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., 5062, 5081-82 (April 20, 1910); for Lever's defense of Pinchot.

the National Conservation Association, dominated by Pinchot; and Ferris, chairman of the House Committee on Public Lands from 1913 to 1919, enjoyed the confidence of both President Wilson and the Association. In 1918, however, Slattery wrote: "Ferris has recently been made Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Committee, which is certainly an unfortunate thing for us. Politics will begin undoubtedly to have quite a sweep with him, and we will certainly have to watch him from now on."⁷⁵ Secretary Daniels and Attorney General Gregory enjoyed good relations with the Pinchot group as well as with La Follette. Their principles were much the same,⁷⁶ and all contributed toward forcing a compromise on leasing, in which the special claimants to public lands, some of them fraudulent, would be granted a minimum of their demands.

The Northeast and the Southeast, in effect, were able at last to force a leasing system upon the West. The passage of the Water Power Act and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 inaugurated a new policy of continuing public ownership and federal trusteeship in which conservation and the national interest seemed to be the winners. These laws, said Senator Walsh, would be regarded in the future as a landmark no less important to western people than the Homestead Act of 1862 or the Mining Act of 1872.⁷⁷ Pinchot declared that the major portion of the Roosevelt program had now been achieved. Slattery, Wells, La Follette, and Daniels were among those who in spite of a few doubts indicated general satisfaction with the compromise.⁷⁸ Undoubtedly they had won something of a victory and the way had been prepared for a larger federal role in the future. The leasing laws of 1920 grew, however, from a long struggle, involving many people who remembered clearly the controversies of the recent past. To separate this and other conservation issues from the pall of suspicions and hatreds in 1918-1921 is impossible.

There was a special rancor after the passage of the leasing acts. Democrats claimed this legislation as an achievement for their party. The Repub-

ibid., 63 Cong., 2 Sess., 15068 (September 12, 1914). See also Pinchot, "Open Letter to the Honorable Franklin K. Lane," August 12, 1916, Pinchot Papers.

⁷⁵ Slattery to Wells, March 16, 1918, Pinchot Papers, Box 1838.

⁷⁶ La Follette in *Cong. Record*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 4715-16 (March 1, 1919); *ibid.*, 66 Cong., 1 Sess., 4750 (September 3, 1919).

⁷⁷ Helena (Mont.) *Independent*, August 3, 1924. See also Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage*, 394-97.

⁷⁸ Pinchot to Slattery, February 24, 1920, Pinchot Papers, Box 1841; Pinchot to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., February 18, 1921, and Slattery to Pinchot, April 3, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 242; Wells to Slattery, February 19, 1920, *ibid.*, Box 1700; Daniels to T. Spellacy, April 12, 1920, Daniels Papers, Box 239. Former Attorney General Gregory expressed the most serious reservations. Gregory to Daniels (for transmittal to the President), February 23, 1920, Thomas W. Gregory Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). In Wells's opinion, this compromise was "about the least harmful" that could be obtained. Wells "Memorandum," February 19, 1920, Pinchot Papers, Box 1700.

lican conservationists retorted that they had originated this program; that without the vigilance of Pinchot and La Follette bad bills would have passed; and that the Sixty-sixth Congress, in which the compromise had been attained, was a Republican Congress elected in 1918.⁷⁹

Progressive Republicans of the Pinchot variety developed a distrust for "southern reactionaries" and others in the Wilson administration.⁸⁰ They regarded as exceptions such men as Josephus Daniels or Thomas W. Gregory. Even President Wilson, they believed, had betrayed them at a critical point in the leasing fight by giving his support to the notorious Pittman bill in February, 1919.⁸¹ Those for whom conservationists reserved a special contempt were Secretary Lane, A. Mitchell Palmer (who succeeded Gregory as attorney general in 1919), and Albert S. Burleson, the postmaster general. Certain Democratic senators were almost in the same class — the "western crowd" including Key Pittman of Nevada, James D. Phelan of California, Charles S. Thomas of Colorado, and Walsh of Montana (coupled with Republicans like Reed Smoot of Utah and Albert B. Fall of New Mexico).⁸²

Lane and Palmer were favorite targets, regarded as being worse than Richard Ballinger. Lane's administration was, and will continue to be, controversial; for he was a complex personality, and his seven years in office were critical for the conservation movement and for the security of the nation itself. Conservationists were convinced quite early in the Wilson years that Lane had turned out to be a dissembler, coming to Washington as a progressive from California, talking the language of an idealist and a conservationist, but siding in fact with special business interests. It is clear, however,

⁷⁹ Slattery to Pinchot, June 5, 1920, Pinchot Papers, Box 1841; Pinchot to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., February 18, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 242; Republican National Committee, "Questionnaire [sic] on Conservation of Natural Resources," 1920, *ibid.*, Box 1860.

⁸⁰ Expressions of discontent and bitterness among progressive Republicans could be multiplied almost indefinitely. Pinchot, in announcing for Harding as the Republican nominee, declared that the country must be taken out of the hands of southern reactionaries. *New York Times*, August 30, 1920. See also Robert D. Carey (governor of Wyoming) to Harold Ickes, September 6, 1920, Harold Ickes Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress), and Wells to Stephen W. Phillips, March 7, 1919 (marked "not sent"), Pinchot Papers, Box 1676.

⁸¹ It seems probable that Wilson, concerned with problems of the peace, had yielded temporarily to western pressure and sanctioned the passage of this bill. See *Cong. Record*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 4490 (February 27, 1919); Pinchot wireless to Wilson, aboard U. S. S. *George Washington* [copy, undated, but February, 1919], Pinchot Papers, Box 1859, and Pinchot to Slattery, February 26, 1919, *ibid.*, Box 1842; Gregory, quoted in *Cong. Record*, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., 4492 (February 27, 1919); Daniels, quoted, *ibid.*, 4396 (February 27, 1919); La Follette analysis, *ibid.*, 4713-16 (March 1, 1919); Wells to Phillips, March 7, 1919 (marked "not sent"), Pinchot Papers, Box 1676, and Slattery to Pinchot, with enclosure of "News Letter on Conservation," March 19, 1919, *ibid.*, Box 1842.

⁸² Slattery to Pinchot, August 19, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1842. See also Slattery to Pinchot, August 2, 1917, *ibid.*, Box 1838; Pinchot to Samuel M. Lindsay, March 6, 1921, *ibid.*, Box 239; Slattery to Pinchot, January 16, 1917, and Pinchot reply, undated, *ibid.*, Box 1838.

that Lane did change after 1913, becoming pro-business in outlook, and though he often played the role of conservationist his heart lay with "the American Pioneer."⁸³ Palmer became persona non grata to progressives of both parties because of his role in the "Red Scare"; but more than that, as attorney general he assumed authority over the disposition of many public land cases, including petroleum cases in California, and was regarded as having failed to protect the public interest.⁸⁴ The progressive Republicans who had initiated conservation came to feel, therefore, that the Wilson administration had badly deteriorated and was no longer to be trusted. They hoped that their own party, after winning the election of 1920, would do better.

Conservation had arrived at a crisis in 1920-1921 more serious than its adherents suspected. Their achievements were not quite so momentous nor so unshakeable as they liked to believe. Political partisanship had become intensified; co-operation between northerners and southerners in behalf of conservation had been rendered more difficult. Albert B. Fall and others who shared his views were moving into positions of responsibility. Many honest men during the 1920's declared for a watered-down version of conservation almost synonymous with business efficiency or gave serious consideration to plans for turning public lands over to the states. Business organizations appropriated, with more or less sincerity, the word "conservation." If ever an opportunity afforded itself for the rejection of Pinchot's ideals concerning democracy in resource use, this was the time.

Conservation not only survived the 1920's; it emerged in some respects stronger than ever. William Kent had observed in 1919 that the conservation principles were gaining acceptance all over the West and that, moreover, many of the ideals growing out of this movement were affecting sentiment in all directions. His own work in conservation had been of all his efforts the most satisfying and constructive.⁸⁵ In 1923 Governor Joseph M.

⁸³ See for example Ernest Knaebel (assistant attorney general) to A. I. McCormick, June 18, 1913, and Lane to Knaebel, July 3, 1913, enclosing letter from M. V. McQuigg to Lane, May 27, 1913, Department of Justice, Record Group 60 (National Archives); Lane, *Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1915* (2 vols., Washington, 1916), I, 17-18; Lane, "The American Pioneer," address at San Francisco Exposition, February 20, 1915, in Pinchot Papers, Box 1856; Pinchot, "Open Letter to the Honorable Franklin K. Lane," August 12, 1916, *ibid*.

⁸⁴ Statement of William Kent in Los Angeles *Record*, March 2, 1920 (clipping in Daniels Papers, Box 235); Daniels to A. Mitchell Palmer, Dec. 6, 1919, quoted in R. G. Tracie, "History of the Naval Petroleum Reserves," MS. in Daniels Papers, Box 264; Daniels to Senator Walsh, May 20, 1924, *ibid*, Box 582; John Ise, *The United States Oil Policy* (New Haven, 1926), 291-94.

⁸⁵ Slattery to Pinchot, August 14, 1919, Pinchot Papers, Box 1842. See also Senator John B. Kendrick to Wilson, June 19, 1918, in which Kendrick asserted his conviction that "public sentiment during the past decade has undergone a very great change and . . . the country is now practically unanimous in the belief that the great resources of

Dixon of Montana, the old "Bull Mooser" then engaged in a bitter struggle against the Anaconda Copper Company, remarked on the growing popularity of the conservation policy. Even its enemies in the West were being converted, he wrote to Pinchot. "It would surprise you to know with what unanimity the people of the West now acquiesce to your own far-sighted vision of thirty years ago. The old crowd that fought so viciously against any governmental regulations of the forest and range are now your most pronounced friends. On several occasions during public talks, I have taken some satisfaction in 'rubbing it in' by telling them that 'Gifford Pinchot saved us [Westerners] from ourselves'."⁸⁶ At the height of the Teapot Dome scandal in 1924 Pinchot declared: "So far the only clear thing about it all seems to be that the conservation policy has once more completely defeated its enemies, and is more strongly entrenched in the public confidence and consideration than ever before."⁸⁷

In spite of its complexity, in spite of its ambiguity, the conservation policy contained an inner vitality that could not be obscured or destroyed. Here was an effort to implement democracy for twentieth-century America, to stop the stealing and exploitation, to inspire high standards of government, to preserve the beauty of mountain and stream, to distribute more equitably the profits of this economy. From McGee, to Pinchot and La Follette, to George Norris and Harold Ickes, to Wayne Morse and Lister Hill — there has burned a democratic zeal, a social faith. The faith was genuine; the propaganda effective. Though a careful evaluation of the impact upon this country remains to be made, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that a fighting band of conservationists has made the United States much richer in material wealth and in the democratic spirit and faith of its people.

the public domain should be held for the benefit of the many rather than sequestered [*sic*] by a few for the benefit of a few." Records of the Department of Justice, Record Group 60 (National Archives).

⁸⁶ Joseph M. Dixon to Pinchot, August 17, 1923, Pinchot Papers, Box 245. See also J. Leonard Bates, "Senator Walsh of Montana, 1918-1924" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1952).

⁸⁷ Pinchot to Sir Horace Plunkett, February 27, 1924, Pinchot Papers, Box 252. See also J. Leonard Bates, "The Teapot Dome Scandal and the Election of 1924," *American Historical Review* (New York), LX (January, 1955), 303-22; Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage*, 401-402, 412-17; E. Louise Peffer, *The Closing of the Pacific Domain* (Stanford, 1951), 288-90.

THE IMMIGRANT IN AMERICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

The word "immigrant" appears to have come into fairly common use only around 1820, when the census for the first time made note of the number of passengers arriving by ship from foreign shores. Between that date and 1930, the total number of immigrants entering the country is recorded as just under 37.8 million, of which an estimated 26.1 million settled. [W. F. Willcox, "Immigration into the U.S.," *International Migration*, vol. XI, Willcox, ed. (1931) 89. Cf. E. W. Gilboy and E. M. Hoover, "Population and Immigration," in *American Economic History*, S. E. Harris, ed. (1961) 265-266.] A plurality of immigrants have come from Germany (6.25 million as of 1950), with Italy (4.8 million), Ireland (4.6 million), Great Britain (4.4 million), and Austria-Hungary (4.2 million) following. (These figures are gross.)

"Immigration" is a word of American origin. Not coincidentally, so is the converse, "nativism." It has often been observed that the notion of "Americanism," with its quasi-religious qualities, has no real counterpart in other nations. It is something like a state or condition, which one can achieve, and (perhaps therefore) fall from, becoming "un-American." The great importance of immigration in American history has shaped these conceptions probably more than any other single force. [See S. M. Lipset, "Sources of the Radical Right," in *The Radical Right*, D. Bell, ed. (Anchor Edition, 1964) 320-321.]

Much of the literature on American immigration has focused on the pathology of "native-newcomer" relations, from general accounts of the problems caused by immigration, to broad studies of nativist movements [especially John Higham's *Strangers in the Land* (1955)] and somewhat defensive statistical efforts to calculate the contributions of immigrants to American life [notably, Brinley Thomas' "The Economic Aspect," in the UNESCO publication, *The Positive Contribution by Immigrants* (1955), Part II, 166-174]. Yet for a country populated so largely by immigrants of diverse backgrounds, the most noteworthy subject for attention might well be not the ethnopathology but the remarkable stability of American life. As Oscar Handlin has written, the diversity of sources of the American population "ruled out the possibility that some myth of common origin might supply a basis for creating communal order; it juxtaposed different and sometimes contradictory ideals of what that order should be like; and it left

prominently embedded in society conflicting interests and values." ["Historical Perspectives on the American Ethnic Group," *Daedalus* (Spring 1961) 222.] Nevertheless, American society has managed to hold together with fewer serious schisms than almost any other society in the world. Part of the answer undoubtedly lies in the peculiar structure of American politics. But no less important is the manner of accommodation achieved by the hundreds of associations, churches, and subsocieties that exist within American society.

Immigration was a major preoccupation of the progressive era, and with good reason. Net immigration (immigration minus emigration) during the period between 1881 and 1910 amounted to 12.5 million people, or one third of the total increase in population in the United States during that period. During that period, too, the major sources of immigration shifted from Germany, Great Britain, and Ireland to Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. In 1910, almost 15 per cent of the total American population was foreign born, the overwhelming number of whom resided in the cities of over 50,000. For the progressive reformers, the difficult problems created by urbanization were critically compounded by the influx of largely Latin- and Slavic-speaking Europeans whose religious affiliations as well as their languages contrasted with the American mode.

There was no single response to massive immigration from among the progressives. Most assumed the virtue, indeed the necessity, of a homogeneous society, and many, such as Henry Demarest Lloyd, even began their analysis of social difficulties with the ostensible breakdown of homogeneity and the consequent paralysis of the "forces of good." To meet this problem, some progressives, like Wisconsin sociologist E. A. Ross, urged exclusion or severe restriction of immigrants. Many more advocated Americanization through the inculcation of Anglo-American values, though an important growing body of intellectuals argued that assimilation in America had been and should properly continue to be achieved by way of the melting pot. But there was also a small group led by John Dewey and Horace Kallen who argued that America's vitality had in fact derived from its *heterogeneity*, and that attempts to stifle cultural diversity would inevitably stifle America's creative power as well.

Professor Gordon's essay, "Assimilation in America," has many outstanding virtues. It surveys the sober and scholarly commentary on immigration throughout the course of American history. It has a freshness that only sociologists seem to be able to bring to the problem of group motivation, a subject, indeed, which historians have tended to overlook. It presents in summary form, moreover, the major historical and historiographic views of immigration: Anglo-conformist, melting pot, and pluralist; and in the notes one may find a valuable bibliography of the most recent scholarship on the subject. Pluralism as a positive philosophical school has its origins in the progressive era, though as a fact of American life it goes far back into the colonial experience. Professor Gordon, of the Department of Sociology in the University of Massa-

chusetts, Amherst, provides us here with a framework that may help one to begin to understand the workability of American heterogeneity.

Assimilation in America: Theory and Reality

MILTON M. GORDON

Three ideologies or conceptual models have competed for attention on the American scene as explanations of the way in which a nation, in the beginning largely white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant, has absorbed over 41 million immigrants and their descendants from variegated sources and welded them into the contemporary American people. These ideologies are Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and cultural pluralism. They have served at various times, and often simultaneously, as explanations of what has happened — descriptive models — and of what should happen — goal models. Not infrequently they have been used in such a fashion that it is difficult to tell which of these two usages the writer has had in mind. In fact, one of the more remarkable omissions in the history of American intellectual thought is the relative lack of close analytical attention given to the theory of immigrant adjustment in the United States by its social scientists.

The result has been that this field of discussion — an overridingly important one since it has significant implications for the more familiar problems of prejudice, discrimination, and majority-minority group relations generally — has been largely preempted by laymen, representatives of belles lettres, philosophers, and apologists of various persuasions. Even from these sources the amount of attention devoted to ideologies of assimilation is hardly extensive. Consequently, the work of improving intergroup relations in America is carried out by dedicated professional agencies and individuals who deal as best they can with day-to-day problems of discriminatory behavior, but who for the most part are unable to relate their efforts to an adequate conceptual apparatus. Such an apparatus would, at one and the same time, accurately describe the present structure of American society with respect to its ethnic groups (I shall use the term “ethnic group” to refer to any racial, religious, or national-origins collectivity), and allow for a considered formulation of its assimilation or integration goals for the foreseeable future.

Reprinted from *Daedalus*, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Spring 1961) 263–285, by permission of the author and *Daedalus*, Journal of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences.

One is reminded of Alice's distraught question in her travels in Wonderland: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal," replied the Cat with irrefutable logic, "on where you want to get to."

The story of America's immigration can be quickly told for our present purposes. The white American population at the time of the Revolution was largely English and Protestant in origin, but had already absorbed substantial groups of Germans and Scotch-Irish and smaller contingents of Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Swedes, Swiss, South Irish, Poles, and a handful of migrants from other European nations. Catholics were represented in modest numbers, particularly in the middle colonies, and a small number of Jews were residents of the incipient nation. With the exception of the Quakers and a few missionaries, the colonists had generally treated the Indians and their cultures with contempt and hostility, driving them from the coastal plains and making the western frontier a bloody battleground where eternal vigilance was the price of survival.

Although the Negro at that time made up nearly one-fifth of the total population, his predominantly slave status, together with racial and cultural prejudice, barred him from serious consideration as an assimilable element of the society. And while many groups of European origin started out as determined ethnic enclaves, eventually, most historians believe, considerable ethnic intermixture within the white population took place. "People of different blood" [sic] — write two American historians about the colonial period, "English, Irish, German, Huguenot, Dutch, Swedish — mingled and intermarried with little thought of any difference."¹ In such a society, its people predominantly English, its white immigrants of other ethnic origins either English-speaking or derived largely from countries of northern and western Europe whose cultural divergences from the English were not great, and its dominant white population excluding by fiat the claims and considerations of welfare of the non-Caucasian minorities, the problem of assimilation understandably did not loom unduly large or complex.

The unfolding events of the next century and a half with increasing momentum dispelled the complacency which rested upon the relative simplicity of colonial and immediate post-Revolutionary conditions. The large-scale immigration to America of the famine-fleeing Irish, the Germans, and later the Scandinavians (along with additional Englishmen and other peoples of northern and western Europe) in the middle of the nineteenth century (the so-called "old immigration"), the emancipation of the Negro slaves and the problems created by post-Civil War reconstruction, the placing of the con-

¹ Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *America: The Story of a Free People* (Boston, Little, Brown, 1942), p. 58.

quered Indian with his broken culture on government reservations, the arrival of the Oriental, first attracted by the discovery of gold and other opportunities in the West, and finally, beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and continuing to the early 1920's, the swelling to proportions hitherto unimagined of the tide of immigration from the peasantries and "pales" of southern and eastern Europe — the Italians, Jews, and Slavs of the so-called "new immigration," fleeing the persecutions and industrial dislocations of the day — all these events constitute the background against which we may consider the rise of the theories of assimilation mentioned above. After a necessarily foreshortened description of each of these theories and their historical emergence, we shall suggest analytical distinctions designed to aid in clarifying the nature of the assimilation process, and then conclude by focusing on the American scene.

ANGLO-CONFORMITY

"Anglo-conformity"² is a broad term used to cover a variety of viewpoints about assimilation and immigration; they all assume the desirability of maintaining English institutions (as modified by the American Revolution), the English language, and English-oriented cultural patterns as dominant and standard in American life. However, bound up with this assumption are related attitudes. These may range from discredited notions about race and "Nordic" and "Aryan" racial superiority, together with the nativist political programs and exclusionist immigration policies which such notions entail, through an intermediate position of favoring immigration from northern and western Europe on amorphous, unreflective grounds ("They are more like us"), to a lack of opposition to any source of immigration, as long as these immigrants and their descendants duly adopt the standard Anglo-Saxon cultural patterns. There is by no means any necessary equation between Anglo-conformity and racist attitudes.

It is quite likely that "Anglo-conformity" in its more moderate aspects, however explicit its formulation, has been the most prevalent ideology of assimilation goals in America throughout the nation's history. As far back as colonial times, Benjamin Franklin recorded concern about the clannishness of the Germans in Pennsylvania, their slowness in learning English, and the establishment of their own native-language press.³ Others of the founding

² The phrase is the Coles's. See Stewart G. Cole and Mildred Wiese Cole, *Minorities and the American Promise* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1954), ch. 6.

³ Maurice R. Davie, *World Immigration* (New York, Macmillan, 1936), p. 36, and (cited therein) "Letter of Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, 9th May, 1753, on the condition and character of the Germans in Pennsylvania," in *The Works of Benjamin Franklin, with notes and a life of the author*, by Jared Sparks (Boston, 1828), vol. 7, pp. 71-73.

fathers had similar reservations about large-scale immigration from Europe. In the context of their times they were unable to foresee the role such immigration was to play in creating the later greatness of the nation. They were not at all men of unthinking prejudices. The disestablishment of religion and the separation of church and state (so that no religious group — whether New England Congregationalists, Virginian Anglicans, or even all Protestants combined — could call upon the federal government for special favors or support, and so that man's religious conscience should be free) were cardinal points of the new national policy they fostered. "The Government of the United States," George Washington had written to the Jewish congregation of Newport during his first term as president, "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Political differences with ancestral England had just been written in blood; but there is no reason to suppose that these men looked upon their fledgling country as an impartial melting pot for the merging of the various cultures of Europe, or as a new "nation of nations," or as anything but a society in which, with important political modifications, Anglo-Saxon speech and institutional forms would be standard. Indeed, their newly won victory for democracy and republicanism made them especially anxious that these still precarious fruits of revolution should not be threatened by a large influx of European peoples whose life experiences had accustomed them to the bonds of despotic monarchy. Thus, although they explicitly conceived of the new United States of America as a haven for those unfortunates of Europe who were persecuted and oppressed, they had characteristic reservations about the effects of too free a policy. "My opinion, with respect to immigration," Washington wrote to John Adams in 1794, "is that except of useful mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement, while the policy or advantage of its taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for, by so doing, they retain the language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them."⁴ Thomas Jefferson, whose views on race and attitudes towards slavery were notably liberal and advanced for his time, had similar doubts concerning the effects of mass immigration on American institutions, while conceding that immigrants, "if they come of themselves . . . are entitled to all the rights of citizenship."⁵

The attitudes of Americans toward foreign immigration in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century may correctly be described as ambiguous.

⁴ *The Writings of George Washington*, collected and edited by W. C. Ford (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889), vol. 12, p. 489.

⁵ Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on Virginia, Query 8," in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. A. E. Bergh (Washington, The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), vol. 2, p. 121.

On the one hand, immigrants were much desired, so as to swell the population and importance of states and territories, to man the farms of expanding prairie settlement, to work the mines, build the railroads and canals, and take their place in expanding industry. This was a period in which no federal legislation of any consequence prevented the entry of aliens, and such state legislation as existed attempted to bar on an individual basis only those who were likely to become a burden on the community, such as convicts and paupers. On the other hand, the arrival in an overwhelmingly Protestant society of large numbers of poverty-stricken Irish Catholics, who settled in groups in the slums of Eastern cities, roused dormant fears of "Popery" and Rome. Another source of anxiety was the substantial influx of Germans, who made their way to the cities and farms of the mid-West and whose different language, separate communal life, and freer ideas on temperance and sabbath observance brought them into conflict with the Anglo-Saxon bearers of the Puritan and Evangelical traditions. Fear of foreign "radicals" and suspicion of the economic demands of the occasionally aroused workingmen added fuel to the nativist fires. In their extreme form these fears resulted in the Native-American movement of the 1830's and 1840's and the "American" or "Know-Nothing" party of the 1850's, with their anti-Catholic campaigns and their demands for restrictive laws on naturalization procedures and for keeping the foreign-born out of political office. While these movements scored local political successes and their turbulences so rent the national social fabric that the patches are not yet entirely invisible, they failed to influence national legislative policy on immigration and immigrants; and their fulminations inevitably provoked the expected reactions from thoughtful observers.

The flood of newcomers to the westward expanding nation grew larger, reaching over one and two-thirds million between 1841 and 1850 and over two and one-half million in the decade before the Civil War. Throughout the entire period, quite apart from the excesses of the Know-Nothings, the predominant (though not exclusive) conception of what the ideal immigrant adjustment should be was probably summed up in a letter written in 1818 by John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State, in answer to the inquiries of the Baron von Fürstenwaerther. If not the earliest, it is certainly the most elegant version of the sentiment, "If they don't like it here, they can go back where they came from." Adams declared:⁶

They [immigrants to America] come to a life of independence, but to a life of labor — and, if they cannot accommodate themselves to the

⁶ *Niles' Weekly Register*, vol. 18, 29 April 1820, pp. 157-158; also, Marcus L. Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860*, pp. 96-97.

character, moral, political and physical, of this country with all its compensating balances of good and evil, the Atlantic is always open to them to return to the land of their nativity and their fathers. To one thing they must make up their minds, or they will be disappointed in every expectation of happiness as Americans. They must cast off the European skin, never to resume it. They must look forward to their posterity rather than backward to their ancestors; they must be sure that whatever their own feelings may be, those of their children will cling to the prejudices of this country.

The events that followed the Civil War created their own ambiguities in attitude toward the immigrant. A nation undergoing wholesale industrial expansion and not yet finished with the march of westward settlement could make good use of the never faltering waves of newcomers. But sporadic bursts of labor unrest, attributed to foreign radicals, the growth of Catholic institutions and the rise of Catholics to municipal political power, and the continuing association of immigrant settlement with urban slums revived familiar fears. The first federal selective law restricting immigration was passed in 1882, and Chinese immigration was cut off in the same year. The most significant development of all, barely recognized at first, was the change in the source of European migrants. Beginning in the 1880's, the countries of southern and eastern Europe began to be represented in substantial numbers for the first time, and in the next decade immigrants from these sources became numerically dominant. Now the notes of a new, or at least hitherto unemphasized, chord from the nativist lyre began to sound — the ugly chord, or discord, of racism. Previously vague and romantic notions of Anglo-Saxon peoplehood, combined with general ethnocentrism, rudimentary wisps of genetics, selected tidbits of evolutionary theory, and naive assumptions from an early and crude imported anthropology produced the doctrine that the English, Germans, and others of the "old immigration" constituted a superior race of tall, blonde, blue-eyed "Nordics" or "Aryans," whereas the peoples of eastern and southern Europe made up the darker Alpines or Mediterraneans — both "inferior" breeds whose presence in America threatened, either by intermixture or supplementation, the traditional American stock and culture. The obvious corollary to this doctrine was to exclude the allegedly inferior breeds; but if the new type of immigrant could not be excluded, then everything must be done to instill Anglo-Saxon virtues in these benighted creatures. Thus, one educator writing in 1909 could state:⁷

⁷ Ellwood P. Cubberly, *Changing Conceptions of Education* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1909), pp. 15-16.

These southern and eastern Europeans are of a very different type from the north Europeans who preceded them. Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock, and to corrupt our civic life. . . . Everywhere these people tend to settle in groups or settlements, and to set up here their national manners, customs, and observances. Our task is to break up these groups or settlements, to assimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things in our national life which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth.

Anglo-conformity received its fullest expression in the so-called Americanization movement which gripped the nation during World War I. While "Americanization" in its various stages had more than one emphasis, it was essentially a consciously articulated movement to strip the immigrant of his native culture and attachments and make him over into an American along Anglo-Saxon lines — all this to be accomplished with great rapidity. To use an image of a later day, it was an attempt at "pressure-cooking assimilation." It had prewar antecedents, but it was during the height of the world conflict that federal agencies, state governments, municipalities, and a host of private organizations joined in the effort to persuade the immigrant to learn English, take out naturalization papers, buy war bonds, forget his former origins and culture, and give himself over to patriotic hysteria.

After the war and the "Red scare" which followed, the excesses of the Americanization movement subsided. In its place, however, came the restriction of immigration through federal law. Foiled at first by presidential vetoes, and later by the failure of the 1917 literacy test to halt the immigrant tide, the proponents of restriction finally put through in the early 1920's a series of acts culminating in the well-known national-origins formula for immigrant quotas which went into effect in 1929. Whatever the merits of a quantitative limit on the number of immigrants to be admitted to the United States, the provisions of the formula, which discriminated sharply against the countries of southern and eastern Europe, in effect institutionalized the assumptions of the rightful dominance of Anglo-Saxon patterns in the land. Reaffirmed with only slight modifications in the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, these laws, then, stand as a legal monument to the creed of Anglo-conformity and a telling reminder that this ideological system still has numerous and powerful adherents on the American scene.

THE MELTING POT

While Anglo-conformity in various guises has probably been the most prevalent ideology of assimilation in the American historical experience, a competing viewpoint with more generous and idealistic overtones has had its adherents and exponents from the eighteenth century onward. Conditions in the virgin continent, it was clear, were modifying the institutions which the English colonists brought with them from the mother country. Arrivals from non-English homelands such as Germany, Sweden, and France were similarly exposed to this fresh environment. Was it not possible, then, to think of the evolving American society not as a slightly modified England but rather as a totally new blend, culturally and biologically, in which the stocks and folkways of Europe, figuratively speaking, were indiscriminately mixed in the political pot of the emerging nation and fused by the fires of American influence and interaction into a distinctly new type?

Such, at any rate, was the conception of the new society which motivated that eighteenth-century French-born writer and agriculturalist, J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, who, after many years of American residence, published his reflections and observations in *Letters from an American Farmer*.⁸ Who, he asks, is the American?

He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. *He* is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great *Alma Mater*. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.

Some observers have interpreted the open-door policy on immigration of the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century as reflecting an underlying faith in the effectiveness of the American melting pot, in the belief "that all could be absorbed and that all could contribute to an emerging national character."⁹ No doubt many who observed with dismay the nativist agita-

⁸ J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York, Albert and Charles Boni, 1925; reprinted from the 1st edn., London, 1782), pp. 54-55.

⁹ Oscar Handlin, ed., *Immigration as a Factor in American History* (Englewood, Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 146.

tion of the times felt as did Ralph Waldo Emerson that such conformity-demanding and immigrant-hating forces represented a perversion of the best American ideals. In 1845, Emerson wrote in his *Journal*:¹⁰

I hate the narrowness of the Native American Party. It is the dog in the manger. It is precisely opposite to all the dictates of love and magnanimity; and therefore, of course, opposite to true wisdom. . . . Man is the most composite of all creatures. . . . Well, as in the old burning of the Temple at Corinth, by the melting and intermixture of silver and gold and other metals a new compound more precious than any, called Corinthian brass, was formed; so in this continent, — asylum of all nations, — the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, and all the European tribes, — of the Africans, and of the Polynesians, — will construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature, which will be as vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting-pot of the Dark Ages, or that which earlier emerged from the Pelagic and Etruscan barbarism. *La Nature aime les croisements.*

Eventually, the melting-pot hypothesis found its way into historical scholarship and interpretation. While many American historians of the late nineteenth century, some fresh from graduate study at German universities, tended to adopt the view that American institutions derived in essence from Anglo-Saxon (and ultimately Teutonic) sources, others were not so sure.¹¹ One of these was Frederick Jackson Turner, a young historian from Wisconsin, not long emerged from his graduate training at Johns Hopkins. Turner presented a paper to the American Historical Association, meeting in Chicago in 1893. Called "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," this paper proved to be one of the most influential essays in the history of American scholarship, and its point of view, supported by Turner's subsequent writings and his teaching, pervaded the field of American historical interpretation for at least a generation. Turner's thesis was that the dominant influence in the shaping of American institutions and American democracy was not this nation's European heritage in any of its forms, nor the forces emanating from the eastern seaboard cities, but rather the experiences created by a moving and variegated western frontier. Among the many effects attributed to the frontier environment and the challenges it presented was that it acted as a solvent for the national heritages and the separatist tendencies of the many nationality groups which had joined the trek westward, including the Germans and Scotch-Irish of the eighteenth century and the Scandinavians and Germans of the nineteenth. "The frontier,"

¹⁰ Quoted by Stuart P. Sherman in his *Introduction to Essays and Poems of Emerson* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1921), p. xxxiv.

¹¹ See Edward N. Saveth, *American Historians and European Immigrants, 1875-1925*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948.

asserted Turner, "promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people. . . . In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics. The process has gone on from the early days to our own." And later, in an essay on the role of the Mississippi Valley, he refers to "the tide of foreign immigration which has risen so steadily that it has made a composite American people whose amalgamation is destined to produce a new national stock."¹²

Thus far, the proponents of the melting pot idea had dealt largely with the diversity produced by the sizeable immigration from the countries of northern and western Europe alone — the "old immigration," consisting of peoples with cultures and physical appearance not greatly different from those of the Anglo-Saxon stock. Emerson, it is true, had impartially included Africans, Polynesians, and Cossacks in his conception of the mixture; but it was only in the last two decades of the nineteenth century that a large-scale influx of peoples from the countries of southern and eastern Europe imperatively posed the question of whether these uprooted newcomers who were crowding into the large cities of the nation and the industrial sector of the economy could also be successfully "melted." Would the "urban melting pot" work as well as the "frontier melting pot" of an essentially rural society was alleged to have done?

It remained for an English-Jewish writer with strong social convictions, moved by his observation of the role of the United States as a haven for the poor and oppressed of Europe, to give utterance to the broader view of the American melting pot in a way which attracted public attention. In 1908, Israel Zangwill's drama, *The Melting Pot*, was produced in this country and became a popular success. It is a play dominated by the dream of its protagonist, a young Russian-Jewish immigrant to America, a composer, whose goal is the completion of a vast "American" symphony which will express his deeply felt conception of his adopted country as a divinely appointed crucible in which all the ethnic divisions of mankind will divest themselves of their ancient animosities and differences and become fused into one group, signifying the brotherhood of man. In the process he falls in love with a beautiful and cultured Gentile girl. The play ends with the performance of the symphony and, after numerous vicissitudes and traditional family opposition from both sides, with the approaching marriage of David Quixano and his beloved. During the course of these developments, David, in the rhetoric of the time, delivers himself of such sentiments as these:¹³

¹² Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, Henry Holt, 1920), pp. 22-23, 190.

¹³ Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot* (New York, Macmillan, 1909), p. 37.

America is God's crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to — these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians — into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

Here we have a conception of a melting pot which admits of no exceptions or qualifications with regard to the ethnic stocks which will fuse in the great crucible. Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Slavs, Greeks, Syrians, Jews, Gentiles, even the black and yellow races, were specifically mentioned in Zangwill's rhapsodic enumeration. And this pot patently was to boil in the great cities of America.

Thus around the turn of the century the melting-pot idea became embedded in the ideals of the age as one response to the immigrant receiving experience of the nation. Soon to be challenged by a new philosophy of group adjustment (to be discussed below) and always competing with the more pervasive adherence to Anglo-conformity, the melting-pot image, however, continued to draw a portion of the attention consciously directed toward this aspect of the American scene in the first half of the twentieth century. In the mid-1940's a sociologist who had carried out an investigation of intermarriage trends in New Haven, Connecticut, described a revised conception of the melting process in that city and suggested a basic modification of the theory of that process. In New Haven, Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy¹⁴ reported from a study of intermarriages from 1870 to 1940 that there was a distinct tendency for the British-Americans, Germans, and Scandinavians to marry among themselves — that is, within a Protestant "pool"; for the Irish, Italians, and Poles to marry among themselves — a Catholic "pool"; and for the Jews to marry other Jews. In other words, intermarriage was taking place across lines of nationality background, but there was a strong tendency for it to stay confined within one or the other of the three major religious groups, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Thus, declared Mrs. Kennedy, the picture in New Haven resembled a "triple melting pot" based on religious divisions, rather than a single melting pot." Her study indicated, she stated, that "while strict endogamy is loosening, religious endogamy is persisting and the future cleavages will be along religious lines

¹⁴ Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting-Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1944, 49: 331-339. See also her "Single or Triple Melting Pot? Intermarriage in New Haven, 1870-1950," *ibid.*, 1952, 58: 56-59.

rather than along nationality lines as in the past. If this is the case, then the traditional 'single-melting-pot' idea must be abandoned, and a new conception, which we term the 'triple-melting-pot' theory of American assimilation, will take its place as the true expression of what is happening to the various nationality groups in the United States."¹⁵ The triple melting-pot thesis was later taken up by the theologian, Will Herberg, and formed an important sociological frame of reference for his analysis of religious trends in American society, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*.¹⁶ But the triple melting-pot hypothesis patently takes us into the realm of a society pluralistically conceived. We turn now to the rise of an ideology which attempts to justify such a conception.

CULTURAL PLURALISM

Probably all the non-English immigrants who came to American shores in any significant numbers from colonial times onward — settling either in the forbidding wilderness, the lonely prairie, or in some accessible urban slum — created ethnic enclaves and looked forward to the preservation of at least some of their native cultural patterns. Such a development, natural as breathing, was supported by the later accretion of friends, relatives, and countrymen seeking out oases of familiarity in a strange land, by the desire of the settlers to rebuild (necessarily in miniature) a society in which they could communicate in the familiar tongue and maintain familiar institutions, and, finally, by the necessity to band together for mutual aid and mutual protection against the uncertainties of a strange and frequently hostile environment. This was as true of the "old" immigrants as of the "new." In fact, some of the liberal intellectuals who fled to America from an inhospitable political climate in Germany in the 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's looked forward to the creation of an all-German state within the union, or, even more hopefully, to the eventual formation of a separate German nation, as soon as the expected dissolution of the union under the impact of the slavery controversy should have taken place.¹⁷ Oscar Handlin, writing of the sons of Erin in mid-nineteenth-century Boston, recent refugees from famine and economic degradation in their homeland, points out: "Unable to par-

¹⁵ Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting-Pot? . . . 1870-1940," p. 332 (author's italics omitted).

¹⁶ Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1955.

¹⁷ Nathan Glazer, "Ethnic Groups in America: From National Culture to Ideology," in Morroe Berger, Theodore Abel, and Charles H. Page, eds., *Freedom and Control in Modern Society* (New York, D. Van Nostrand, 1954), p. 161; Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1940), pp. 129-140; John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America* (New York, Putnam's, 1940), *passim*.

ticipate in the normal associational affairs of the community, the Irish felt obliged to erect a society within a society, to act together in their own way. In every contact therefore the group, acting apart from other sections of the community, became intensely aware of its peculiar and exclusive identity."¹⁸ Thus cultural pluralism was a fact in American society before it became a theory — a theory with explicit relevance for the nation as a whole, and articulated and discussed in the English-speaking circles of American intellectual life.

Eventually, the cultural enclaves of the Germans (and the later arriving Scandinavians) were to decline in scope and significance as succeeding generations of their native-born attended public schools, left the farms and villages to strike out as individuals for the Americanizing city, and generally became subject to the influences of a standardizing industrial civilization. The German-American community, too, was struck a powerful blow by the accumulated passions generated by World War I — a blow from which it never fully recovered. The Irish were to be the dominant and pervasive element in the gradual emergence of a pan-Catholic group in America, but these developments would reveal themselves only in the twentieth century. In the meantime, in the last two decades of the nineteenth, the influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had begun. These groups were all the more sociologically visible because the closing of the frontier, the occupational demands of an expanding industrial economy, and their own poverty made it inevitable that they would remain in the urban areas of the nation. In the swirling fires of controversy and the steadier flame of experience created by these new events, the ideology of cultural pluralism as a philosophy for the nation was forged.

The first manifestations of an ideological counterattack against draconic Americanization came not from the beleaguered newcomers (who were, after all, more concerned with survival than with theories of adjustment), but from those idealistic members of the middle class who, in the decade or so before the turn of the century, had followed the example of their English predecessors and "settled" in the slums to "learn to sup sorrow with the poor."¹⁹ Immediately, these workers in the "settlement houses" were forced to come to grips with the realities of immigrant life and adjustment. Not all reacted in the same way, but on the whole the settlements developed an approach to the immigrant which was sympathetic to his native cultural heritage and to his newly created ethnic institutions.²⁰ For one thing, their

¹⁸ Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1959, rev. edn.), p. 176.

¹⁹ From a letter (1883) by Samuel A. Barnett; quoted in Arthur C. Holden, *The Settlement Idea* (New York, Macmillan, 1922), p. 12.

²⁰ Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York, Macmillan, 1914), pp. 231–

workers, necessarily in intimate contact with the lives of these often pathetic and bewildered newcomers and their daily problems, could see how unfortunate were the effects of those forces which impelled rapid Americanization in their impact on the immigrants' children, who not infrequently became alienated from their parents and the restraining influence of family authority. Were not their parents ignorant and uneducated "Hunkies," "Sheenies," or "Dagoes," as that limited portion of the American environment in which they moved defined the matter? Ethnic "self-hatred" with its debilitating psychological consequences, family disorganization, and juvenile delinquency, were not unusual results of this state of affairs. Furthermore, the immigrants themselves were adversely affected by the incessant attacks on their culture, their language, their institutions, their very conception of themselves. How were they to maintain their self-respect when all that they knew, felt, and dreamed, beyond their sheer capacity for manual labor — in other words, all that they *were* — was despised or scoffed at in America? And — unkindest cut of all — their own children had begun to adopt the contemptuous attitude of the "Americans." Jane Addams relates in a moving chapter of her *Twenty Years at Hull House* how, after coming to have some conception of the extent and depth of these problems, she created at the settlement a "Labor Museum," in which the immigrant women of the various nationalities crowded together in the slums of Chicago could illustrate their native methods of spinning and weaving, and in which the relation of these earlier techniques to contemporary factory methods could be graphically shown. For the first time these peasant women were made to feel by some part of their American environment that they possessed valuable and interesting skills — that they too had something to offer — and for the first time, the daughters of these women who, after a long day's work at their dank "needletrade" sweatshops, came to Hull House to observe, began to appreciate the fact that their mothers, too, had a "culture," that this culture possessed its own merit, and that it was related to their own contemporary lives. How aptly Jane Addams concludes her chapter with the hope that "our American citizenship might be built without disturbing these foundations which were laid of old time."²¹

This appreciative view of the immigrant's cultural heritage and of its distinctive usefulness both to himself and his adopted country received additional sustenance from another source: those intellectual currents of the day which, however overborne by their currently more powerful opposites, emphasized liberalism, internationalism, and tolerance. From time to

258; Arthur C. Holden, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-131, 182-189; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1955), p. 236.

²¹ Jane Addams, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

time, an occasional educator or publicist protested the demands of the "Americanizers," arguing that the immigrant, too, had an ancient and honorable culture, and that this culture had much to offer an America whose character and destiny were still in the process of formation, an America which must serve as an example of the harmonious cooperation of various heritages to a world inflamed by nationalism and war. In 1916 John Dewey, Norman Hapgood, and the young literary critic, Randolph Bourne, published articles or addresses elaborating various aspects of this theme.

The classic statement of the cultural pluralist position, however, had been made over a year before. Early in 1915 there appeared in the pages of *The Nation* two articles under the title "Democracy *versus* the Melting-Pot." Their author was Horace Kallen, a Harvard-educated philosopher with a concern for the application of philosophy to societal affairs, and, as an American Jew, himself derivative of an ethnic background which was subject to the contemporary pressures for dissolution implicit in the "Americanization," or Anglo-conformity, and the melting-pot theories. In these articles Kallen vigorously rejected the usefulness of these theories as models of what was actually transpiring in American life or as ideals for the future. Rather he was impressed by the way in which the various ethnic groups in America were coincident with particular areas and regions, and with the tendency for each group to preserve its own language, religion, communal institutions, and ancestral culture. All the while, he pointed out, the immigrant has been learning to speak English as the language of general communication, and has participated in the over-all economic and political life of the nation. These developments in which "the United States are in the process of becoming a federal state not merely as a union of geographical and administrative unities, but also as a cooperation of cultural diversities, as a federation or commonwealth of national cultures,"²² the author argued, far from constituting a violation of historic American political principles, as the "Americanizers" claimed, actually represented the inevitable consequences of democratic ideals, since individuals are implicated in groups, and since democracy for the individual must by extension also mean democracy for his group.

The processes just described, however, as Kallen develops his argument, are far from having been thoroughly realized. They are menaced by "Americanization" programs, assumptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and misguided attempts to promote "racial" amalgamation. Thus America stands at a kind of cultural crossroads. It can attempt to impose by force an ar-

²² Horace M. Kallen, "Democracy *versus* the Melting-Pot," *The Nation*, 18 and 25 February 1915; reprinted in his *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, New York, Boni and Liveright, 1924; the quotation is on p. 116.

tificial, Anglo-Saxon oriented uniformity on its peoples, or it can consciously allow and encourage its ethnic groups to develop democratically, each emphasizing its particular cultural heritage. If the latter course is followed, as Kallen puts it at the close of his essay, then,²³

The outlines of a possible great and truly democratic commonwealth become discernible. Its form would be that of the federal republic; its substance a democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously through common institutions in the enterprise of self-realization through the perfection of men according to their kind. The common language of the commonwealth, the language of its great tradition, would be English, but each nationality would have for its emotional and involuntary life its own peculiar dialect or speech, its own individual and inevitable esthetic and intellectual forms. The political and economic life of the commonwealth is a single unit and serves as the foundation and background for the realization of the distinctive individuality of each *natio* that composes it and of the pooling of these in a harmony above them all. Thus "American civilization" may come to mean the perfection of the cooperative harmonies of "European civilization" — the waste, the squalor and the distress of Europe being eliminated — a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind.

Within the next decade Kallen published more essays dealing with the theme of American multiple-group life, later collected in a volume.²⁴ In the introductory note to this book he used for the first time the term "cultural pluralism" to refer to his position. These essays reflect both his increasingly sharp rejection of the onslaughts on the immigrant and his culture which the coming of World War I and its attendant fears, the "Red scare," the projection of themes of racial superiority, the continued exploitation of the newcomers, and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan all served to increase in intensity, and also his emphasis on cultural pluralism as the democratic antidote to these ills. He has since published other essays elaborating or annotating the theme of cultural pluralism. Thus, for at least forty-five years, most of them spent teaching at the New School for Social Research, Kallen has been acknowledged as the originator and leading philosophical exponent of the idea of cultural pluralism.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's the late Louis Adamic, the Yugoslav immigrant who had become an American writer, took up the theme of America's multicultural heritage and the role of these groups in forging the country's national character. Borrowing Walt Whitman's phrase, he described America as "a nation of nations," and while his ultimate goal was

²³ Kallen, *Culture and Democracy*. . . , p. 124.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*

closer to the melting-pot idea than to cultural pluralism, he saw the immediate task as that of making America conscious of what it owed to all its ethnic groups, not just to the Anglo-Saxons. The children and grandchildren of immigrants of non-English origins, he was convinced, must be taught to be proud of the cultural heritage of their ancestral ethnic group and of its role in building the American nation; otherwise, they would not lose their sense of ethnic inferiority and the feeling of rootlessness he claimed to find in them.

Thus in the twentieth century, particularly since World War II, "cultural pluralism" has become a concept which has worked its way into the vocabulary and imagery of specialists in intergroup relations and leaders of ethnic communal groups. In view of this new pluralistic emphasis, some writers now prefer to speak of the "integration" of immigrants rather than of their "assimilation."²⁵ However, with a few exceptions,²⁶ no close analytical attention has been given either by social scientists or practitioners of intergroup relations to the meaning of cultural pluralism, its nature and relevance for a modern industrialized society, and its implications for problems of prejudice and discrimination — a point to which we referred at the outset of this discussion.

CONCLUSIONS

In the remaining pages I can make only a few analytical comments which I shall apply in context to the American scene, historical and current. My view of the American situation will not be documented here, but may be considered as a series of hypotheses in which I shall attempt to outline the American assimilation process.

First of all, it must be realized that "assimilation" is a blanket term which in reality covers a multitude of subprocesses. The most crucial distinction is one often ignored — the distinction between what I have elsewhere called "behavioral assimilation" and "structural assimilation."²⁷ The first refers to the absorption of the cultural behavior patterns of the "host" society. (At the same time, there is frequently some modification of the cultural patterns of the immigrant-receiving country, as well.) There is a special term for this

²⁵ See W. D. Borrie *et al.*, *The Cultural Integration of Immigrants* (a survey based on the papers and proceedings of the UNESCO Conference in Havana, April 1956), Paris, UNESCO, 1959; and William S. Bernard, "The Integration of Immigrants in the United States" (mimeographed), one of the papers for this conference.

²⁶ See particularly Milton M. Gordon, "Social Structure and Goals in Group Relations"; and Nathan Glazer, "Ethnic Groups in America; From National Culture to Ideology," both articles in Berger, Abel, and Page, *op. cit.*; S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954; and W. D. Borrie *et al.*, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Milton M. Gordon, "Social Structure and Goals in Group Relations," p. 151.

process of cultural modification or "behavioral assimilation" — namely, "acculturation." "Structural assimilation," on the other hand, refers to the entrance of the immigrants and their descendants into the social cliques, organizations, institutional activities, and general civic life of the receiving society. If this process takes place on a large enough scale, then a high frequency of intermarriage must result. A further distinction must be made between, on the one hand, those activities of the general civic life which involve earning a living, carrying out political responsibilities, and engaging in the instrumental affairs of the larger community, and, on the other hand, activities which create personal friendship patterns, frequent home inter-visiting, communal worship, and communal recreation. The first type usually develops so-called "secondary relationships," which tend to be relatively impersonal and segmental; the latter type leads to "primary relationships," which are warm, intimate, and personal.

With these various distinctions in mind, we may then proceed.

Built on the base of the original immigrant "colony" but frequently extending into the life of successive generations, the characteristic ethnic group experience is this: within the ethnic group there develops a network of organizations and informal social relationships which permits and encourages the members of the ethnic group to remain within the confines of the group for all of their primary relationships and some of their secondary relationships throughout all the stages of the life cycle. From the cradle in the sectarian hospital to the child's play group, the social clique in high school, the fraternity and religious center in college, the dating group within which he searches for a spouse, the marriage partner, the neighborhood of his residence, the church affiliation and the church clubs, the men's and the women's social and service organizations, the adult clique of "marrieds," the vacation resort, and then, as the age cycle nears completion, the rest home for the elderly and, finally, the sectarian cemetery — in all these activities and relationships which are close to the core of personality and selfhood — the member of the ethnic group may if he wishes follow a path which never takes him across the boundaries of his ethnic structural network.

The picture is made more complex by the existence of social class divisions which cut across ethnic group lines just as they do those of the white Protestant population in America. As each ethnic group which has been here for the requisite time has developed second, third, or in some cases, succeeding generations, it has produced a college-educated group which composes an upper middle class (and sometimes upper class, as well) segment of the larger groups. Such class divisions tend to restrict primary group relations even further, for although the ethnic-group member feels a general sense of identification with all the bearers of his ethnic heritage, he feels

comfortable in intimate social relations only with those who also share his own class background or attainment.

In short, my point is that, while *behavioral assimilation* or acculturation has taken place in America to a considerable degree, *structural assimilation*, with some important exceptions has not been extensive.²⁸ The exceptions are of two types. The first brings us back to the "triple melting pot" thesis of Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy and Will Herberg. The "nationality" ethnic groups have tended to merge within each of the three major religious groups. This has been particularly true of the Protestant and Jewish communities. Those descendants of the "old" immigration of the nineteenth century, who were Protestant (many of the Germans and all the Scandinavians), have in considerable part gradually merged into the white Protestant "subociety." Jews of Sephardic, German, and Eastern-European origins have similarly tended to come together in their communal life. The process of absorbing the various Catholic nationalities, such as the Italians, Poles, and French Canadians, into an American Catholic community hitherto dominated by the Irish has begun, although I do not believe that it is by any means close to completion. Racial and quasi-racial groups such as the Negroes, Indians, Mexican-Americans, and Puerto Ricans still retain their separate sociological structures. The outcome of all this in contemporary American life is thus pluralism — but it is more than "triple" and it is more accurately described as *structural pluralism* than as cultural pluralism, although some of the latter also remains.

My second exception refers to the social structures which implicate intellectuals. There is no space to develop the issue here, but I would argue that there is a social world or subsociety of the intellectuals in America in which true structural intermixture among persons of various ethnic backgrounds, including the religious, has markedly taken place.

My final point deals with the reasons for these developments. If structural assimilation has been retarded in America by religious and racial lines, we must ask why. The answer lies in the attitudes of both the majority and the minority groups and in the way these attitudes have interacted. A saying of the current day is, "It takes two to tango." To apply the analogy, there is no good reason to believe that white Protestant America has ever extended a firm and cordial invitation to its minorities to dance. Furthermore, the attitudes of the minority-group members themselves on the matter have been divided and ambiguous. Particularly for the minority religious groups, there is a certain logic in ethnic communality, since there is a commitment to the perpetuation of the religious ideology and since structural intermixture leads

²⁸ See Erich Rosenthal, "Acculturation without Assimilation?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 1960, 66: 275-288.

to intermarriage and the possible loss to the group of the intermarried family. Let us, then, examine the situation serially for various types of minorities.

With regard to the immigrant, in his characteristic numbers and socioeconomic background, structural assimilation was out of the question. He did not want it, and he had a positive need for the comfort of his own communal institutions. The native American, moreover, whatever the implications of his public pronouncements, had no intention of opening up his primary group life to entrance by these hordes of alien newcomers. The situation was a functionally complementary standoff.

The second generation found a much more complex situation. Many believed they heard the siren call of welcome to the social cliques, clubs, and institutions of white Protestant America. After all, it was simply a matter of learning American ways, was it not? Had they not grown up as Americans, and were they not culturally different from their parents, the "greenhorns?" Or perhaps an especially eager one reasoned (like the Jewish protagonist of Myron Kaufmann's novel, *Remember Me To God*, aspiring to membership in the prestigious club system of Harvard undergraduate social life) "If only I can go the last few steps in Ivy League manners and behavior, they will surely recognize that I am one of them and take me in." But, alas, Brooks Brothers suit notwithstanding, the doors of the fraternity house, the city men's club, and the country club were slammed in the face of the immigrant's offspring. That invitation was not really there in the first place; or, to the extent it was, in Joshua Fishman's phrase, it was a "'look me over but don't touch me' invitation to the American minority group child."²⁹ And so the rebuffed one returned to the homelier but dependable comfort of the communal institutions of his ancestral group. There he found his fellows of the same generation who had never stirred from the home fires. Some of these had been too timid to stray; others were ethnic ideologists committed to the group's survival; still others had never really believed in the authenticity of the siren call or were simply too passive to do more than go along the familiar way. All could now join in the task that was well within the realm of the sociologically possible — the build-up of social institutions and organizations within the ethnic enclave, manned increasingly by members of the second generation and suitably separated by social class.

Those who had for a time ventured out gingerly or confidently, as the case might be, had been lured by the vision of an "American" social structure

²⁹ Joshua A. Fishman, "Childhood Indoctrination for Minority-Group Membership and the Quest for Minority-Group Biculturalism in America," in Oscar Handlin, ed., *Group Life in America* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

that was somehow larger than all subgroups and was ethnically neutral. Were they, too, not Americans? But they found to their dismay that at the primary group level a neutral American social structure was a mirage. What at a distance seemed to be a quasi-public edifice flying only the all-inclusive flag of American nationality turned out on closer inspection to be the clubhouse of a particular ethnic group — the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, its operation shot through with the premises and expectations of its parental ethnicity. In these terms, the desirability of whatever invitation was grudgingly extended to those of other ethnic backgrounds could only become a considerably attenuated one.

With the racial minorities, there was not even the pretense of an invitation. Negroes, to take the most salient example, have for the most part been determinedly barred from the cliques, social clubs, and churches of white America. Consequently, with due allowance for internal class differences, they have constructed their own network of organizations and institutions, their own "social world." There are now many vested interests served by the preservation of this separate communal life, and doubtless many Negroes are psychologically comfortable in it, even though at the same time they keenly desire that discrimination in such areas as employment, education, housing, and public accommodations be eliminated. However, the ideological attachment of Negroes to their communal separation is not conspicuous. Their sense of identification with ancestral African national cultures is virtually nonexistent, although Pan-Africanism engages the interest of some intellectuals and although "black nationalist" and "black racist" fringe groups have recently made an appearance at the other end of the communal spectrum. As for their religion, they are either Protestant or Catholic (overwhelmingly the former). Thus, there are no "logical" ideological reasons for their separate communality; dual social structures are created solely by the dynamics of prejudice and discrimination, rather than being reinforced by the ideological commitments of the minority itself.

Structural assimilation, then, has turned out to be the rock on which the ships of Anglo-conformity and the melting pot have foundered. To understand that behavioral assimilation (or acculturation) without massive structural intermingling in primary relationships has been the dominant motif in the American experience of creating and developing a nation out of diverse peoples is to comprehend the most essential sociological fact of that experience. It is against the background of "structural pluralism" that strategies of strengthening intergroup harmony, reducing ethnic discrimination and prejudice, and maintaining the rights of both those who stay within and those who venture beyond their ethnic boundaries must be thoughtfully devised.

13

WHY WE WENT TO WAR

The outbreak of World War I came as a tremendous shock to the western world. Not that war was unexpected; rather, it was *unbelievable*. "What shall we say," asked the director of the World Peace Foundation a year before Sarajevo, "of the Great War of Europe, ever threatening, ever impending and which never comes? We shall say that it will never come. Humanly speaking, it is impossible." After a century of peace (not counting border wars, colonial wars, and wars for national unity) it seemed unthinkable that the world's most civilized people could ever again indulge in the barbarism of full-scale warfare among themselves.

But if the onset of the war was shocking, the war itself produced a still greater trauma. U-boats, poison gas, aerial bombings, and the direct involvement of civilians in war brutality tended to jolt a society that, at the outbreak, had still lingered on the notion that even barbarism must adhere to rules of decency. Then, of course, there were the actual casualties: counting the military dead only, Germany lost 1.8 million men, Russia, 1.7 million, France, 1.4 million, Austria-Hungary, 1.2 million, Great Britain, 947,000; and on down to the United States' losses of 107,000 dead in less than a year of actual military engagement. Back home, the "walking dead" with their missing limbs and mutilated faces advertised war's triumph over valor, while the words "shell shock" entered the language to describe the suffering of those who left their sanity somewhere in the trenches as hostage to the genius of military technology.

From the beginning, the American inclination was to keep out of it. President Woodrow Wilson implored the American people to remain "impartial in thought as well as in action," and to "put a curb upon our sentiments as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another." But the nationalistic, ethnic, economic, and other pressures for intervention proved too great, and in less than three years we were in it. As Paul Birdsall notes in the article that follows, the German decision to wage unlimited submarine warfare in February, 1917 unquestionably was the immediate cause of American intervention, but how the Germans came to back into that corner has remained a source of major controversy among historians and laymen.

Essentially, the controversy focuses on two points: (1) the role played by Wilson's pro-Allied predilections, and (2) the role played

by American economic interests. That Wilson sympathized with the Allies — particularly with Britain — defies refutation; that these sympathies bore directly upon our involvement remains to be demonstrated. It may be said that Wilson's prejudices made it impossible for him to play the role of mediator (which he so zealously coveted) on terms reasonably acceptable to the Germans. Yet it is equally clear that the British had little desire for a Wilsonian mediation on any terms. Wilson might have been able to avoid eventual American participation by refusing U.S. assistance to the Allies early in the War (either by an embargo, or the equivalent, by banning credit arrangements), forcing them to capitulate to German military power for want of supplies. But even if Wilson had been willing to accept a British defeat, it seems highly unlikely that the American electorate would have allowed him to do it. Here, even the most anti-Wilson partisans have to concede that German behavior had something to do with "taking us to war." The sinking in May 1915 of the *Lusitania*, that era's approximate equivalent to the *Queen Elizabeth* of our time, and the Germans' mishandling of the negotiations that followed, served to heighten an already hostile sentiment in this country. It was on the night after he learned of the *Lusitania's* destruction and the loss of 124 American lives that Wilson made the speech in which he said, "There is such a thing as being too proud to fight." In effect, he was pleading with the country to keep its head. But so violent was the public reaction that Wilson was forced to retract the substance of his point the next day. For a long time thereafter, it was impossible for him to attempt any rapprochement with Germany.

But aside from the pressure of pro-Allied sentiments in the U.S., Wilson was restrained from restricting American credit and shipments for two reasons. One was his possibly ill-advised (though far from unreasonable) interpretation of international law that made such a move appear to be a relinquishment of our neutral rights and specifically anti-British as well. The other was that such a move would almost certainly result in the immediate collapse of American prosperity. It is to the role of the American economic commitment that Mr. Birdsall (former Professor of History, Williams College) addresses himself in the article that follows.

The influence of economic interests has long been a subject for opprobrious comment by politicians and historians. That the U.S. could have become entangled in World War I because of its economic interests continues to smell bad to those who grew up in what intellectuals call "the progressive tradition." Paul Birdsall's article is especially remarkable because he tends to regard the economic motive as entirely legitimate, although he wrote in an era that was especially critical of pecuniary motivation. With the American economic stake in international commerce, and particularly in its commerce with the Allies, what other policy could the U.S. government have been expected to take?

For a long time, Wilson suffered severely from critics for ostensibly

pandering to economic interests, and his defenders have spilled much ink saying it wasn't so. But in this age of *realpolitik* Wilson has required a new defense. Among the historians who have endorsed the Wilsonian course, Ernest May has confronted the economic issue most bluntly. Noting that Wilson himself had argued before a Kansas audience that in addition to the moral obligation to stay out of war there was also "a moral obligation . . . to keep free the courses of our commerce and of our finance," May concludes: "The government did have an overriding obligation to protect the business and the rights and the safety of its citizens. It would have been unfaithful to its trust, as well as to the national tradition, if it had failed to help Americans make money out of the war." [*The World War and American Isolationism, 1914-1917* (1959) 184.]

It is probably unnecessary to go quite so far to recognize that German maritime policy represented a distinct threat to America's sizable commerce with Europe whereas Britain's blockade, for all practical purposes, did not; moreover, if at that point the U.S. failed to assert and protect its stake in international commerce, it would have seriously jeopardized its economic growth and would have become committed to secondary status among the world powers. But it is one thing to justify U.S. intervention on these grounds, and another to contend that Wilson had a clear understanding of such realities. Despite the efforts of May, A. S. Link [*Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality* (1960) and *Wilson the Diplomatist* (1957)], and E. H. Buehrig [*Woodrow Wilson and the Balance of Power* (1955)], Wilson's intermittent concern for economic self-interest or for national security does not seem to outweigh his far more usual preoccupation with universal principles. [See R. E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations* (1953); also Osgood's "Woodrow Wilson, Collective Security, and the Lessons of History," *Confluence*, V (Winter 1957).] That Wilson worked to hold American intervention to the principles of universal law and altruism with which he justified it surely stands as one of the noblest acts of civilization; that a major power could enter a major war seeking "no conquest, no dominion . . . no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make" is probably unique in all history. Unfortunately, this achievement left the American people unprepared for the *realpolitik* of Versailles and thereafter. As Henry F. May has remarked, the assumptions and purposes of the Wilson War Message "had little to do with the particular war Wilson was talking about, and, in their most literal aspects, little to do with history itself." [*The End of American Innocence* (1959) 386.]

For additional short but first-rate treatment of this difficult subject, students should also see D. M. Smith, "Robert Lansing and the Formulation of American Neutrality Policies, 1914-1915," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLII (June 1956); R. W. Leopold, "The Problem of American Intervention, 1917: An Historical Retrospect," *World Politics*, II (April 1950).

Neutrality and Economic Pressures, 1914-1917

PAUL BIRDSALL

Twenty years of debate have not yet produced a satisfactory or even a coherent neutrality policy for the United States, nor have they yet offered any real understanding of the problem of neutrality in the modern world to serve as a basis for policy making. Until we have some adequate analysis of the forces which destroyed President Wilson's neutrality policy between 1914 and 1917 no government is likely to be more successful than his in future efforts to master such forces. Nor will the neutrality legislation of the past years help very much if it simply ignores these forces.

The trouble with much of the writing on the World War period is that it deals with separate aspects of the problem in watertight compartments with complete disregard of the complex interrelations between economic and political phenomena. Thus Charles Seymour deals almost exclusively with the diplomatic record of our relations with Imperial Germany and from that record draws the only possible conclusion, that "It was the German submarine warfare and nothing else that forced him [Wilson] to lead America into war."¹ The late Newton D. Baker arrives by the same route at the same conclusion: "Certainly the occasion of the United States entering the World War was the resumption of submarine warfare." That Baker had a glimpse of more remote and subtle causation is indicated by his choice of the word "occasion" and by his admission that critics may with some justification charge him with oversimplification by confusing "occasion" with "cause." "This," he says, "I may to some extent have done."² Each of these authors is content with a surface record of diplomacy and politics without reference to the fundamental context of economic and social phenomena which alone can give it significance for analysis of the large problem of neutrality.

Nor does it advance the investigation to turn one's back completely on the diplomatic record and resort to a narrow economic determinism, as does

Reprinted from *Science and Society* III (Spring 1939) 217-228, by permission of *Science and Society*.

¹ *American Diplomacy during the World War* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934), p. 210. See also *American Neutrality, 1914-1917* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1935).

² *Foreign Affairs*, xv (Oct., 1936), p. 85.

Senator Nye. Ignoring the inescapable evidence that German submarine warfare was the immediate "occasion" for American entry into the war, he argues the simple thesis that American bankers first forced the American Government to authorize large loans to France and Great Britain, and when those countries were faced with defeat, then forced the American Government into the war to protect the bankers' investments. I have heard Senator Nye publicly express embarrassment at the lack of any direct evidence to support the second, and for his purposes the essential, part of his thesis, but what he lacks in evidence he makes up in faith.³

What is most needed is careful synthesis of the accurate and valid parts of the diplomatic and economic theses. Senator Nye's committee has given us invaluable data on the development of close economic ties with the Entente Powers in the face of a government policy of neutrality designed to prevent just that development, even if the committee failed to analyze the precise forces at work.⁴ We have accurate and scholarly studies explaining the *immediate* cause of American intervention as due to the German decision to wage unrestricted submarine warfare. But no one has yet demonstrated the connection between American economic ties with Germany's enemies and Germany's submarine campaign which provoked American intervention. It is precisely this connection which reveals the true significance of the economic relationship, namely that it makes neutrality in modern war impossible — unless the economic relationships with belligerents can somehow be prevented. And that must be the first subject of investigation.

II

If Senator Nye is right in contending that it was primarily the intrigues of the banking interests which prevented a genuine neutrality policy, then the present legislation to curb such activity in the future should prove adequate. But careful study of the evidence he has himself unearthed does not bear him out.

The Wilson administration attempted to enforce a neutrality policy identical with that now prescribed by statute in respect to loans to belligerents. To be sure there was no effort to prevent the sale of munitions to belligerents, and Secretary of State Bryan explained why in a letter of January 20, 1915 to Senator Stone of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. He

³ C. C. Tansill, *America Goes to War* (Boston, 1938), p. 133.

⁴ *Hearings before the Special Senate Committee on the Investigation of the Munitions Industry*. United States Senate. 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1937). Many of the same documents were published in the *New York Times* (Jan. 8-12, 1936). Many are to be found in R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson* (Garden City, 1935), v.

said that "the duty of a neutral to restrict trade in munitions of war has never been imposed by international law or municipal statute. . . . [It] has never been the policy of this government to prevent the shipment of arms or ammunition into belligerent territory, except in the case of the American Republics, and then only when civil strife prevailed."⁵ Moreover the German government admitted the legality of the munitions traffic as late as December 15, 1914 even while they complained of its disadvantage to their cause.

Very different was the official attitude toward loans to belligerent governments. The State Department recognized no greater legal obligation to prevent them than the sale of munitions. Lansing, Bryan's subordinate and successor, said he knew of no legal objection but agreed with Bryan in urging that the United States government refuse to approve loans to belligerents. Bryan said that "money is the worst of all contrabands," and on August 15, 1914, wrote J. P. Morgan, who wished to finance a French loan, "There is no reason why loans should not be made to the governments of neutral nations, but in the judgment of this government, *loans by American bankers to any foreign nation which is at war are inconsistent with the spirit of true neutrality.*"⁶ Our State Department has never received the credit it deserves for its realistic appraisal of the issues of neutrality and its refusal to take refuge in the technicalities of international law. It is scarcely the fault of the State Department that powerful economic forces almost at once began to undermine its policy and within the year forced its abandonment. Nor can it be denied that the German government itself helped destroy the policy by sinking the *Lusitania*.

The first efforts to modify the State Department's policy came from the bankers, specifically the house of J. P. Morgan. Lamont testifies that Morgan's firm accepted the State Department ruling but asked permission at least to extend credits to foreign governments to facilitate purchases in the United States, on the theory that this was purely a bookkeeping arrangement very different from the sale of belligerent bonds on the open market. On October 23, 1914 Lansing recorded a conversation he had with President Wilson dealing with this request, in which Wilson accepted the distinction as valid. "There is a decided difference between an issue of government bonds, sold in the open market to investors, and an arrangement for easy exchange in meeting debts incurred between the government and American merchants." The latter was merely a means of facilitating trade. Accordingly Straight of the firm of Morgan was authorized to open credits of this character for belligerent governments, particularly the French. On

⁵ Baker, *Wilson*, v, p. 179-184 and 189.

⁶ New York Times, Jan. 8, 1936; Baker, *Wilson*, v, p. 175 f.

March 31, 1915 the State Department issued a public statement of its policy in the following press release. "While loans to belligerents have been disapproved, this government has not felt that it was justified in interposing objections to the credit arrangements which have been brought to its attention. It has neither approved these nor disapproved — it has simply taken no action and expressed no opinion."⁷

The destruction of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine undermined the State Department's neutrality policy in two ways, by causing the resignation of Bryan (who refused to take responsibility for Wilson's stiff notes of protest to Germany), and by establishing in the post of Secretary of State his former subordinate Lansing. Lansing says in his memoirs that after the *Lusitania* there was always in his mind the "conviction that we would ultimately become the ally of Britain."⁸ He was therefore less disposed to maintain the rigid standards of neutrality set by Bryan. Yet in the event it was economic pressures that overwhelmed the policy.

In August of 1915 the British pound sterling began to sag in the exchange market under the pressure of war finance, and the first note of warning of threat to American export business appears in a letter of August 14 from Governor Strong of the New York Federal Reserve Bank to Col. House. Strong said that the drop of sterling to below \$4.71 had already led to cancellation of many foreign contracts for the purchase of American grain. He predicted more to follow and feared for the drastic curtailment of all American exports. On August 21 Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo wrote to President Wilson, "Great Britain is and always has been our best customer. . . . The high prices for food products have brought great prosperity to the farmers, while the purchasers of war munitions have stimulated industry and have set factories going to full capacity. . . . Great prosperity is coming. It is, in large measure, already here. It will be tremendously increased if we can extend reasonable credits to our customers." It was therefore imperative, he said, that Great Britain be permitted to float a loan of \$500,000,000 at once. "To maintain our prosperity we must finance it." Unfortunately, according to him, the way was barred by the State Department ban on foreign loans, and by the pro-German attitude of two members of the Federal Reserve Board, Miller and Warburg.⁹

Wilson's reply was an evasion. On August 26, he wrote Lansing, "My opinion is that we should say that 'parties would take no action either for or against such a transaction,' but that this should be orally conveyed, and not put in writing. Yrs. W. W." But Lansing wanted something more defi-

⁷ New York Times, Jan. 8, 1936. Also Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 186 f.

⁸ War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (Indianapolis, 1935), p. 128.

⁹ New York Times, Jan. 10, 1936. Cf. Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 380 f.

nite and wrote a long letter rehearsing all McAdoo's arguments. "Doubtless Sec'y McAdoo has discussed with you the necessity of floating government loans for the belligerent nations, which are purchasing such great quantities of goods in this country, in order to avoid a serious financial situation which will not only affect them but this country as well." He estimated excess of American exports over imports for the entire year at \$2,500,000,000 and alleged that the figure from December 1, 1914 to June 30, 1915 was only slightly less than \$1,000,000,000. "If the European countries cannot find the means to pay for the excess of goods sold them over those purchased from them, they will have to stop buying and our present export trade will shrink proportionately. The result would be restriction of output, industrial depression, idle capital, idle labor, numerous failures, financial demoralization, and general unrest and suffering among the laboring classes. . . . Can we afford to let a declaration as to our conception of the 'true spirit of neutrality,' made in the early days of the war, stand in the way of our national interests which seem to be seriously threatened?" McAdoo had stressed the opportunity for national prosperity; Lansing threatened the horrors of national depression. Wilson replied two days later, on September 8, "I have no doubt that our oral discussion of this letter suffices. If it does not, will you let me know that you would like a written reply? W. W." Shortly after this the house of Morgan floated a loan of \$500,000,000 on behalf of the British and French governments.¹⁰

What of Senator Nye's contention that the bankers got us into the war by exerting direct pressure on Washington to protect their "investment"? It remains to be proved that the investment did get us into the war, and it is perfectly clear that direct pressure on Washington ceased when their desire to float loans for belligerent governments was granted. It is likewise clear that the government did not relinquish its ban on such loans out of any tender concern for the bankers as a group. What McAdoo, Lansing, and Wilson feared was a national economic depression. The bankers were in the happy position of being able to serve both God and Mammon. The situation is summarized in a single paragraph of Lansing's letter of September 6: "I believe that Secretary McAdoo is convinced, and I agree with him, that there is only one means of avoiding this situation which would so seriously affect economic conditions in this country, and that is the flotation of large bond issues by the belligerent governments. Our financial institutions have the money to loan and wish to do so."¹¹

At this point the conclusions of Seymour and Baker seem irresistible. They conclusively demonstrate from the diplomatic record that German

¹⁰ New York Times, Jan. 10 and 11, 1936. Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 381-383.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

resort to unrestricted submarine warfare was the immediate cause of American participation in the war. Yet they are strangely incurious about the reasons for the German decision, which have a very direct connection with the American departure from its own deliberately adopted policy of forbidding loans to belligerents. The fact that the German decision was made with full realization that it would force the United States into the war is certainly something that needs to be explained and the search for an explanation is revealing.

III

There were two forces struggling for control within Germany, the civilian government of Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, and the naval-military element. The latter favored extreme military policies without regard to diplomatic consequences, while Bethmann waged a losing fight on behalf of elementary political common-sense. In regard to the specific issue of submarine warfare the military group were uncompromising advocates of its unrestricted use as against Bethmann's warnings that such a policy was certain to bring the United States into the war in the ranks of Germany's enemies. After the sinking of the *Sussex* in March 1916 Bethmann was able to dominate the situation for the rest of the year. On May 4, 1916 the German Government gave to the United States a pledge to abide by the rules of cruiser warfare, abandoning the attacks on passenger ships, and promising to obey the rules of visit and search as they applied to merchant vessels. That the pledge was conditional on American enforcement of international law on Great Britain was a clear indication that Bethmann's victory was not decisive. The military element opposed the pledge from the beginning and fought for its abrogation from May throughout the rest of the year, with ultimate success.¹²

They did not in the least contest the civilian thesis that unrestricted submarine warfare would force the United States into the war. They blithely admitted it — and said it did not matter! Here is the reasoning. On May 4, the very day of the *Sussex* pledge, General Falkenhayn wrote Bethmann: "I consider unrestricted U-boat warfare not only one, but the *only* effective instrument of war at our disposal capable of bringing England to consider peace negotiations. . . . So far as this situation is concerned [the probable entry of the United States into the war] *America's step from secret war in which it has long been engaged against us, to an openly declared hostility can effect no real change.*"¹³ Hindenburg and Ludendorff grew more and

¹² Carnegie Endowment, *Official German Documents Relating to the World War* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1923), II, p. 1151, no. 155.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1151 f., no. 156.

more impatient of the civilians' incurable timidity about war with the United States. They renewed their attack at the end of August, and Holtzendorff of the Admiralty Staff carried their complaints to Bethmann. "The objections to this mode of warfare are not considered mainly from the standpoint of the effect upon England, but from that of the reaction upon the United States. . . . *The United States can scarcely engage in more hostile activities than she has already done up to this time.*"¹⁴ On August 31 at Pless, the civilian and military elements fought it out, with Jagow, Helfferich, and Bethmann standing firmly together against the generals. All three warned that war with the United States must inevitably follow resumption of submarine warfare, and that active American participation would be fatal to Germany. For the time being they again won their point, and it was agreed that final decision might await the outcome of the Rumanian campaign.¹⁵ Even after that Bethmann was permitted to try his hand at peace negotiations in December, but their complete failure, coupled with Wilson's inability to mediate, inevitably brought renewed pressure from the military. Ludendorff on December 22 told the Foreign Office again that formal American participation in the war would alter nothing, and on the same day Holtzendorff brought in an Admiralty report to much the same effect. It dismissed the danger of American troops by showing how much time was needed for their training and transport; it calculated that the American supply of munitions — already at capacity — would be less rather than more available to Germany's enemies because they would be reserved for American use. Positive advantage would accrue to Germany from restored freedom of action in sinking even passenger ships which carried munitions. The only disadvantage conceded by the report was the possible increase in American loans to the belligerents, but the amount of these was already so tremendous a factor in the economic strength of the hostile coalition that little additional danger from that source was to be anticipated.¹⁶ Bethmann had for some time been yielding to the arguments and the importunities of the military, and the conference at Pless on January 9, 1917 sealed his defeat by the decision to renew unrestricted submarine warfare. Hindenburg's final words were, "It simply must be. We are counting on the possibility of war with the United States, and have made all preparations to meet it. *Things cannot be worse than they now are.* The war must be brought to an end by the use of all means as soon as possible."¹⁷ The United States declared war on April 6, 1917.

The civilians were right and the military were wrong in their calculations

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1153, no. 157.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1154-1163, no. 158.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1200 f., no. 177, and p. 1218 f., no. 190.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1317-1319, no. 212.

as to the ultimate importance of a formal declaration of war by the United States. But the arguments of the military were plausible and they carried the day. Their promise to reduce England speedily to prostration was tempting, but it was essentially a gamble, and it is hard to see how they could have overborne civilian opposition if they had not had so plausible an answer to the one serious argument that the civilians presented. The answer was always that formal participation of the United States in the war would bring no change in the fundamental situation of American economic support to the Allies. The major influence in shaping the decision which brought the United States into the war is to be found in American policy in the economic sphere, specifically the decision of the Wilson administration in August, 1915 to abandon a policy deliberately adopted in the interest of neutrality early in the war. It was government permission to bankers to float loans for belligerent governments in order to finance American export trade that provided the Allies with resources which Germany could not obtain. That in turn weighted the scales in favor of the extremists and against the moderates in Germany, and provoked the decision which forced the United States into the war.

It is equally clear that the administration yielded to pressures which no administration is likely to withstand. The alternative policy of strict adherence to its earlier standards of neutrality meant economic depression on a national scale. It is scarcely drawing the long bow to say that the fundamental cause of the failure of American neutrality policy was economic, nor is it unreasonable to suppose that the same economic factors will again in the future make a genuine and strict policy of neutrality unworkable, no matter what laws may be written on the statute books to enforce it. The only sensible course is to renounce our illusions and to face the world of reality where there is no longer any such thing as neutrality. In the face of a possible collapse of the collective security system as an alternative to ostrich isolationism and "neutrality" the area of choice is tragically narrowed. It would seem to involve a choice between deciding whether we should now affirm our decision publicly that we will align ourselves with the democracies of the world in the event of war on the long chance of preventing the war, or follow that policy of drift which will sooner or later involve us in inevitable war without our having any very clear cut program of war aims to achieve.

Is such realism conceivable in the present state of confusion of mind? Probably not, because of the tenacity of outworn but hallowed concepts and poli-

cies. Neutrality has a long history and its own particular folklore. Two of its high priests, Borchard and Lage, treat it as an all-sufficient decalogue when rightly interpreted and strictly adhered to. ". . . Neutral rights were as clear in 1914 as was any other branch of public law, and while the law was grossly violated during the war, it has not thereby been ended or modified."¹⁸ The real difficulty they discover in Wilson's repudiation of "the very basis of American tradition in foreign policy." The submarine controversy with Germany is made to turn on Wilson's "insistence as a matter of National Honor that American citizens were privileged to travel unmolested on belligerent vessels."¹⁹ It follows that there was no adequate excuse for the United States to break "with its fundamental principles by the unprecedented decision to participate in a European war. . . ."²⁰ Consequently there is no need to explore the economic background against which the drama of neutrality was played out, unless indeed there was no such drama at all, but only a skillful bit of play acting. Borchard and Lage devote exactly one page out of a total of three hundred and fifty to the administration's retreat from its original prohibition of loans to belligerent governments, with the remark that "No more than casual reference needs to be made to one of the more egregious lurches into unneutrality, whereby the United States and its people were led into financing the munitions supply of one set of the belligerents, the Allies."²¹ In their account this appears as but a minor detail in a general policy of partisanship of the Allies' cause. And so at the end they reject the argument that the conditions of the modern world make American neutrality impossible as "humiliating to American independence."²² Denying the efficacy of any improvised formula, they recommend "an honest intention to remain aloof from foreign conflict, a refusal to be stampeded by unneutral propaganda, *a knowledge of the law and capacity to stand upon it*, meeting emergencies and problems not romantically but wisely."²³ It can be argued plausibly that President Wilson fought against overwhelming odds to realize exactly that program.

At least historians should not become victims of the legal exegesis that obscures the unreality of the neutrality concept. But the latest and most comprehensive account of American intervention in the World War, Tan-sill's *America Goes to War*, is almost totally lacking in interpretative treatment and completely lacking in synthesis. His very full chapters on the events leading to abandonment of the administration's loan policy are writ-

¹⁸ *Neutrality for the United States* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1937), p. 345.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40. The authors say, p. 41, that ". . . only public lending could meet the need, and that meant war." They do not explain why.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 345.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 350. (The italics are mine.)

ten largely in terms of "War Profits Beckon to 'Big Business,'" ²⁴ with very little reference to the administration's concern with the economic condition of the country as a whole. Moreover he fails completely to show the political and diplomatic implications of the economic ties in his concluding paragraph that deals with them. "The real reasons why America went to war cannot be found in any single set of circumstances. There was no clear-cut road to war that the President followed with certain steps that knew no hesitation. There were many dim trails of doubtful promise, and one along which he travelled with early misgivings and reluctant tread was that which led to American economic solidarity with the Allies."²⁵ Tansill leaves it at that without any attempt to pursue the profound effect of this economic solidarity on the equilibrium of political forces in Germany which I have been at pains to trace in the central portion of this essay. This is all the more remarkable because Tansill is the only writer on the subject who has conscientiously studied that unstable equilibrium extensively in the German official documents. He has used most if not all of the documents I have cited to prove the decisive effect of the economic argument on the submarine decision — and many more — without ever apparently noting the presence of that argument at all. In his quotations from the documents he simply does not quote the passages where the argument appears. Despite his failure to see relationships, and his avoidance of interpretation, his account is still the fullest treatment available of all the complex phenomena, economic, political, psychological, inherent in the neutrality problem. But it is a compendium devoid of significance for an intelligent understanding of the neutrality problem.

The definitive study at once analytical and interpretative as well as comprehensive has yet to appear, and until it does appear there is small hope of enlightenment.²⁶

²⁴ Title of chapter 3, p. 67-89.

²⁵ C. C. Tansill, *America Goes to War*, p. 134.

²⁶ I have deliberately omitted from consideration in these pages one of the most colorful of the historical accounts, Walter Millis's *Road to War* (Cambridge, 1935). It is journalistic and dramatic with little pretense at analysis. There is recognition that economic relations with the Allies were dangerous to neutrality, but no attempt to show precisely how. For example, p. 336, "... the United States was enmeshed more deeply than ever in the cause of Allied victory." But there is no effort to explain the submarine decision in these terms (p. 372f.).

THE FAILURE OF SOCIALISM IN AMERICA

"The first generation of American Communists," writes Theodore Draper in his definitive study, "grew to maturity in a world hospitable to every variety of radicalism. A later generation, which has grown to maturity in a world hospitable to every variety of conservatism, may find it difficult to enter into the spirit of this age of unrest." [*The Roots of American Communism* (1957) 49.]

The enormous vitality of the progressive era can be measured in part by the respectability that radicalism gained in those years. Even as the progressive movement itself sought to avoid socialist solutions for contemporary problems, in promoting their own programs the reformers showed little of the self-conscious avoidance of a socialist stigma so prevalent in our own time. Socialist writers had little trouble gaining forums in leading periodicals, and socialist journals proliferated and had wide circulation. At its height in 1912, the Socialist party itself published 5 English and 8 foreign-language newspapers, 262 English and 36 foreign-language weeklies, and 10 English and 2 foreign-language monthlies. More than a thousand Socialists held public office at the start of 1912, including 56 mayors in cities such as Milwaukee, Schenectady, Flint, Berkeley, and Butte. There was one Socialist congressman and a handful of state legislators. Later in 1912, despite intraparty feuds and the competition of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson espousing reform platforms, the Socialist candidate, Eugene Debs, polled about 900,000 or 6 per cent of the votes cast for President. Socialist strength resided, moreover, not in a few urban centers such as New York or Chicago, but in rural western states such as Oklahoma, California, and Montana.

After 1912, the Socialists ran steeply downhill. The World War finished them, at least until their brief revival during the decade of the depression. Of the great, historic, many-sided movement for a socialist millennium, the American Communist party alone survived with some measure of vitality.

The Socialists suffered from many weaknesses. One was their inability to gain a secure foothold within American labor organizations; they resisted work-a-day labor reforms such as higher wages and a shorter day, the mainstay of trade-union activity, because such reforms offered no challenge to the capitalistic wage system while they reduced labor militancy. At the same time, high vertical mobility in American society undermined the Socialist argument that workers

could find no "real" melioration short of the overturn of the social and economic structure. Old Socialist controversies, particularly over the effectiveness of direct economic action as opposed to political pressure, perennially divided the leadership. European socialists who migrated to America brought their doctrinal disputes with them, diverting the movement from practical accommodations to American political conditions. At the height of their strength, the Socialists split in two over the tactical use of violence and sabotage, Bill Hayward of the IWW and Western Miners Federation endorsing it and Eugene Debs opposing it. Finally, the War forced the Socialists into a fatal choice between living at peace with the nationalistic values of American society or of confirming their alienation. The issue fragmented all factions, with the more numerous anti-War Socialists led by Debs incurring the opprobrium of the public and the repression of the government.

In the article that follows, Daniel Bell (Professor of Sociology, Columbia University) probes beyond these weaknesses to the psychological and ethical ambivalences in the socialist dream. Mr. Bell's scope is wide. Writing during the era of "McCarthyism," which he calls "a nightmare of distrust and bitterness," he traces the evolution of the socialist vision from its "chiliastic origins" and the hope of a cooperative commonwealth to its rancorous 20th century perversion. He makes clear the important differences in the technique of the Communist party that gave that group the appearance of vitality — and, according to Bell, evoked a society riven with fear and suspicion — while the Socialists went down to oblivion.

For more comprehensive treatment, see Bell's "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," in *Socialism in American Life*, D. D. Egbert and S. Persons, eds., vol. I. R. F. Hoxie, "The Rising Tide of Socialism," *Journal of Political Economy*, XIX (October 1911) is a perceptive contemporary study. S. M. Lipset's "My View from Our Left," *Columbia University Forum*, V (Fall 1962), is noteworthy because of its suggestion that America has in fact fulfilled the socialist dream. J. Laslett, "Reflections on the Failure of Socialism in the American Federation of Labor," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, L (March 1964), is an interesting case study of three unions, but should be supplemented with M. Karson, *American Labor Unions and Politics, 1900-1918* (1958). As a fresh and incisive study of the repression of radicalism at the end of World War I, S. Cohen's "A Study in Nativism: The American Red Scare of 1919-20," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXIX (March 1964) is indispensable.

Socialism: The Dream and the Reality

DANIEL BELL

Socialism was once an unbounded dream. Fourier promised that under socialism people would be at least "ten feet tall." Karl Kautsky proclaimed that the average citizen of a socialist society would be a superman. The flamboyant Antonio Labriola told his Italian followers that their socialist-bred children would each be Galileos and Giordano Brunos. And the grandiloquent Trotsky described the socialist millennium as one in which "man would become immeasurably stronger, wiser, freer, his body more harmoniously proportioned, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical, and the forms of his existence permeated with dramatic dynamism."

America, too, was an unbounded dream. The utopians gamboled in the virgin wilderness. Some immigrants called it the *golden medinah*, the golden land. Here it seemed as if socialism would have its finest hour. Both Marx and Engels felt a boundless optimism. In 1879 Marx wrote, ". . . the United States have at present overtaken England in the rapidity of economical progress, though they lag still behind in the extent of acquired wealth; but at the same time, the masses are quicker, and have greater political means in their hands, to resent the form of a progress accomplished at their expense." Engels, who wrote a score of letters on the American scene in the late 1880's and early '90's, repeated this prediction time and again. In his introduction to the American edition of *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, written at the height of enthusiasm over the events of 1886 — notably the spectacular rise of the Knights of Labor and the Henry George campaign — he exulted: "On the more favored soil of America, where no medieval ruins bar the way, where history begins with the elements of modern bourgeois society, as evolved in the seventeenth century, the working class passed through these two stages of its development [i.e., a national trade-union movement and an independent labor party] within ten months." And five years later, his optimism undiminished by the sorry turn of events, Engels wrote to Schlüter. ". . . continually renewed waves of advance, followed by equally certain set-backs, are inevitable. Only the advancing waves are becoming more powerful, the set-backs

less paralyzing. . . . Once the Americans get started it will be with an energy and violence compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children."

But there still hovers the melancholy question, posed by Werner Sombart at the turn of the century in the title of a book, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* To this Sombart supplied one set of answers. He pointed to the open frontiers, the many opportunities for social ascent through individual effort, and the rising standard of living of the country as factors. Other writers have expanded these considerations. Selig Perlman, in his *Theory of the Labor Movement*, advanced three reasons for the lack of class consciousness in the United States: the absence of a "settled" wage-earner class; the "free gift" of the ballot (workers in other countries, denied such rights — for example, the Chartists — developed political rather than economic motivations); and third, the impact of succeeding waves of immigration. It was immigration, said Perlman, which gave rise to the ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural heterogeneity of American labor, and to the heightened ambitions of immigrants' sons to escape their inferior status.

In the end, all such explanations fall back on the naturally-endowed resources and material vastness of America. Other explanations have indicated equally general, and relevant, facts. Some have stressed the agrarian basis of American life, with the farmer seesawing to radicalism and conservatism in tune to the business cycle. Others have pointed to the basically geographic, rather than functional, organization of the two-party system, with its emphasis on opportunism, rhetoric, and patronage as the mode of political discourse; hence, compromise, rather than rigid principle, becomes the prime concern of the interest-seeking political bloc.

Implicit in many of these analyses, however, was the notion that such conditions were but temporary. Capitalism as an evolving social system would of necessity "mature." Crises would follow, and at that time a large, self-conscious wage-earner class and a socialist movement, perhaps on the European pattern, would probably emerge. The great depression was such a crisis — an emotional shock which shook the self-confidence of the entire society. It left permanent scar tissue in the minds of the American workers. It spurred the organization of a giant trade-union movement which in ten years grew from less than three million to over fifteen million workers, or one-fourth of the total labor force of the country.¹ It brought in its train the smoking-hot organizing drives and sit-downs in the Ohio industrial valley which gave the country a whiff of class warfare. In the 1940's labor entered

¹ Actually such a statistic slights the real magnitude of labor's swift rise. The nonagricultural labor force is approximately forty-five million, so that unionization touches one in three. Even here a further breakdown is revealing. Nearly every major manufacturing industry (except chemicals and textiles) is more than 80 per cent unionized.

national politics with a vigor — in order to safeguard its economic gains. Here at last was the fertile soil which socialist theorists had long awaited. Yet no socialist movement emerged, nor has a coherent socialist ideology taken seed either in labor movement or in government. So Sombart's question still remains unanswered.

Most of the attempted answers have discussed not *causes* but *conditions*, and these in but general terms. An inquiry into the fate of a social movement has to be pinned in the specific questions of time, place, and opportunity, and framed within a general hypothesis regarding the "why" of its success or failure. The "why" which this essay proposes (with the usual genuflections to *ceteris paribus*), is that the failure of the socialist movement in the United States is rooted in its inability to resolve a basic dilemma of ethics and politics. The socialist movement, by its very statement of goal and in its rejection of the capitalist order as a whole, could not relate itself to the specific problems of social action in the here-and-now, give-and-take political world. It was trapped by the unhappy problem of living "*in* but not *of* the world," so it could only act, and then inadequately, as the moral, but not political, man in immoral society. It could never resolve but only straddle the basic issue of either accepting capitalist society, and seeking to transform it from within as the labor movement did, or becoming the sworn enemy of that society, like the communists. A religious movement can split its allegiances and live *in* but not *of* the world (like Lutheranism); a political movement can not.

In social action there is an irreconcilable tension between ethics and politics. Lord Acton posed the dilemma in a note: "Are politics an attempt to realize ideals, or an endeavor to get advantages, within the limits of ethics?" More succinctly, "are ethics a purpose or a limit?" In the largest sense, society is an organized system for the distribution of tangible rewards and privileges, obligations and duties. Within that frame, ethics deals with the *ought* of distribution, implying a theory of justice. Politics is the concrete *mode* of distribution, involving a power struggle between organized groups to determine the allocation of privilege. In some periods of history, generally in closed societies, ethics and politics have gone hand in hand. But a distinguishing feature of modern society is the separation of the two; and ideology — the façade of general interest and universal values which masks a specific self-interest — replaces ethics. The redivision of the rewards and privileges of society can only be accomplished in the political arena. But in that fateful commitment to politics, an ethical goal, stated as purpose rather than limit, becomes a far-reaching goal before which lies a yawning abyss that can be spanned only by a "leap." The alternatives were forcefully posed

by Max Weber in his contrast between the "ethics of responsibility" (or the acceptance of limits) and the "ethics of conscience" (or the dedication to absolute ends). Weber, arguing that only the former is applicable in politics, writes: "The matter does not appear to me so desperate if one does not ask exclusively who is morally right and who is morally wrong? But if one rather asks: Given the existing conflict how can I solve it with the least internal and external danger for all concerned?" Such a pragmatic compromise rather than dedication to an absolute (like bolshevism or religious pacifism) is possible, however, only when there is a basic consensus among contending groups about the rules of the game. But this consensus the socialist movement, because of its original rejection of capitalist society, while operating within it, could never fully accept.

The distinctive character of "modern" politics is the involvement of *all* strata of society in movements of social change, rather than the fatalistic acceptance of events as they are. Its starting point was, as Karl Mannheim elegantly put it, the "orgiastic chiliasm" of the Anabaptists, their messianic hope, their ecstatic faith in the millennium to come. For, as Mannheim and others have pointed out, the Anabaptism of the sixteenth century, of Thomas Münzer and those who sought to establish at Münster the Kingdom of God on earth, proclaimed not merely that equality of souls stressed by Luther, but also equality of property. Other-worldly religious quietism became transformed into a revolutionary activism in order to realize the millennium in the here and now. Thus the religious frenzy of the chiliasts which burst the bonds of the old religious order threatened to buckle the social order as well; for unlike previous revolutions, chiliasm did not aim against a single oppression, but at the entire existing social order.

The characteristic psychological fact about the chiliast is that for him "there is no inner articulation of time." There is only the "absolute presentness." "Orgiastic energies and ecstatic outbursts began to operate in a worldly setting and tensions previously transcending day to day life became explosive agents within it." The chiliast is neither "in the world nor of it." He stands outside of it and against it because salvation, the millennium, is immediately at hand. Where such a hope is possible, where such a social movement can transform society in a cataclysmic flash, the "leap" is made, and in the pillar of fire the fusion of ethics and politics is possible. But where societies are stable, and social change can only come piecemeal, the pure chiliast in despair turns nihilist, rather than make the bitter-tasting compromises with the established hierarchical order. "When this spirit ebbs and deserts these movements," writes Mannheim, "there remains behind in the world a naked mass-frenzy and despiritualized fury." In a later and

secularized form, this attitude found its expression in Russian anarchism. So Bakunin could write: "The desire for destruction is at the same time a creative desire."

Yet not only the anarchist, but every socialist, every convert to political messianism, is in the beginning something of a chiliast. In the newly-found enthusiasms, in the identification with an oppressed group, hope flares that the "final conflict" will not be far ahead. ("Socialism in our time," was the affirmative voice of Norman Thomas in the 1930's.) But the "revolution" is not always immediately in sight, and the question of how to discipline this chiliastic zeal and hold it in readiness has been the basic problem of socialist strategy.

The most radical approach was that of Georges Sorel with his concept of revolutionary myth ("*images de batailles*"), a myth which functions as a bastardized version of the doctrine of salvation. These unifying images, Sorel wrote, can neither be proved nor disproved; thus they are "capable of evoking as an undivided whole" the mass of diverse sentiments which exist in society. "The syndicalists solve this problem perfectly, by concentrating the whole of socialism in the drama of the general strike; thus there is no longer any place for the reconciliation of contraries in the equivocations of the professors; everything is clearly mapped out so that only one interpretation of Socialism is possible." In this "catastrophic conception" of socialism, as Sorel called it, "*it is the myth in its entirety which is alone important.*"

But in the here and now, people live "in parts." "History does not work with bottled essences," wrote Acton, "but with active combinations; compromise is the soul if not the whole of politics. Occasional conformity is the nearest practical approach to orthodoxy and progress is along diagonals. . . . Pure dialectics and bilateral dogmas have less control than custom and interest and prejudice." And for the socialist movements, operating on "partial" day-to-day problems, the dilemma remained.

Neither nineteenth-century American radicals nor the American socialists faced up to this problem of social compromise. The utopias that were spun so profusely in the nineteenth century assumed that in the course of evolution "reason" would find its way and the perfect society would emerge. But so mechanical were the mannikin visions of human delights in such utopias that a modern reading of Bellamy, for example, with its plan for conscript armies of labor ("a horrible cockney dream," William Morris called *Looking Backward*) only arouses revulsion.

The "scientific socialist" movement that emerged at the turn of the century mocked these utopian unrealities. Only the organization of the proletariat could bring a better world. But this apparent relatedness to the world was itself a delusion. The socialist dilemma was still how to face the prob-

lem of "in the world and of it," and in practice the early socialist movement "rejected" the world; it simply waited for the new. Although the American Socialist Party sought to function politically by raising "immediate demands" and pressing for needed social reforms, it rarely took a stand on the actual political problems that emerged from the on-going functioning of the society. "What but meaningless phrases are 'imperialism,' 'expansion,' 'free silver,' 'gold standard,' etc., to the wage worker?" asked Eugene V. Debs in 1900. "The large capitalists represented by Mr. McKinley and the small capitalists represented by Mr. Bryan are interested in these 'issues' but they do not concern the working class." These "issues" were beside the point, said Debs, because the worker stood outside society. Thus Debs and the socialist movement as a whole would have no traffic with the capitalist parties. Even on local municipal issues the party would not compromise. The socialist movement could "afford" this purity because of its supreme confidence about the future. "The socialist program is not a theory imposed upon society for its acceptance or rejection. It is but the interpretation of what is, sooner or later, inevitable. Capitalism is already struggling to its destruction," proclaimed the Socialist national platform of 1904, the first issued by the Socialist Party.

But unlike the other-worldly movements toward salvation, which can always postpone the date of the resurrection, the Socialist Party, living in the here and now, had to show results. It was a movement based on a belief in "history"; but it found itself outside of "time." World War I finally broke through the façade. For the first time the party had to face a stand on a realistic issue of the day. And on that issue almost the entire intellectual leadership of the party deserted, and the back of American socialism was broken.

The socialist movement of the 1930's, the socialism of Norman Thomas, could not afford the luxury of the earlier belief in the inevitable course of history. It was forced to take stands on the particular issues of the day. But it too rejected completely the premises of the society which shaped these issues. In effect, the Socialist Party acknowledged the fact that it lived "in" the world, but refused the responsibility of becoming a part "of" it. But such a straddle is impossible for a *political* movement. It was as if it consented to a duel, with no choice as to weapons, place, amount of preparation, etc. Politically, the consequences were disastrous. Each issue could only be met by an ambiguous political formula which would satisfy neither the purists, nor the activist who lived with the daily problem of choice. When the Loyalists in Spain demanded arms, for example, the Socialist Party could only respond with a feeble policy of "workers aid," not (capitalist) government aid; but to the Spaniard, arms, not theoretical niceties, were the need of the

moment. When the young trade unionists, whom the socialists seeded into the labor movement, faced the necessity of going along politically with Roosevelt and the New Deal in order to safeguard progressive legislative gains, the socialists proposed a "labor party" rather than work with the Democrats, and so the Socialist Party lost almost its entire trade-union base. The threat of fascism and World War II finally proved to be the clashing rocks through which the socialist argonauts could not row safely. How to defeat Hitler without supporting capitalist society? Some socialists raised the slogan of a "third force." The Socialist Party, however, realized the futility of that effort; in characteristic form, it chose abnegation. The best way to stem fascism, it stated, "is to make democracy work at home." But could the issue be resolved other than militarily? The main concern of the anti-fascist movement had to be with the political center of fascist power, Hitler's Berlin, and any other concern was peripheral.

In still another way the religious, chiliastic origin of modern socialism revealed itself — the multiplication of splits, the constant formation of sectarian splinter groups each hotly disputing the other regarding the true road to power. Socialism is an eschatological movement; it is sure of its destiny, because "history" leads it to its goal. But though sure of its final ends, there is never a standard of testing the immediate means. The result is a constant factiousness in socialist life. Each position taken is always open to challenge by those who feel that it would only swerve the movement from its final goal and lead it up some blind alley. And because it is an ideological movement, embracing all the realm of the human polity, the Socialist Party is always challenged to take a stand on every problem from Viet Nam to Finland, from prohibition to pacifism. And, since for every two socialists there are always three political opinions, the consequence has been that in its inner life, the Socialist Party has never, *even for a single year*, been without some issue which threatened to split the party and which forced it to spend much of its time on the problem of reconciliation or rupture. In this fact lies the chief clue to the impotence of American socialism as a political movement, especially in the past twenty years.²

But what of the proletariat itself? What is its role in the socialist drama of history? How does the proletariat see through the veils of obscurity and come to self-awareness? Marx could say with Jesus, "I have come to end all

² Far beyond the reaches of this essay is the problem of the psychological types who are attracted by such a sectarian existence. Yet one might say here that certainly the illusions of settling the fate of history, the mimetic combat on the plains of destiny, and the vicarious sense of power in demolishing opponents all provide a sure sense of gratification which makes the continuance of sectarian life desirable. The many leadership complexes, the intense aggressiveness through gossip, the strong clique group formations, all attest to a particular set of psychological needs and satisfactions which are fulfilled in these opaque, molecular worlds.

mysteries, not to perpetuate them." His role, in his own self-image, was to lay bare the fetishes which enslave modern man and thus confute Hegel's claim that freedom and rationality had already been achieved. But like his old master he could only deal with the "immanent" forces of history, not the mechanics of social action.

All political movements, Marx wrote, have been slaves to the symbols of the past. But history is the process of progressive disenchantment: men are no longer bound to the river gods and anthropomorphic deities of the agricultural societies; nor need they be bound to the abstract impersonal deity of bourgeois Protestantism. Man himself was potential. But how to realize his potentiality? The intellectual was, in part, capable of self-emancipation because he possessed the imagination to transcend his origins. But the proletariat, as a class, could develop only to the extent that the social relations of society itself revealed to the slave the thongs that bound him. Man is no more free, said Marx in *Das Kapital*, because he can sell his labor power to whom he wishes. Exploitation is implicit in the very structure of capitalist society, which in order to live must constantly expand by extracting surplus value and thus accumulate new capital. In the process, the proletarian would be reduced to the barest minimum of human existence (the law of increasing misery) and thus robbed of any mark of distinction. In the agony of alienation and the deepening class struggle he would realize consciously a sense of identity which would unite him with others and create a cohesive social movement of revolution. In action he would no longer be manipulated but "make" himself.

Thus the scene is set for the grand drama. Out of the immanent, convulsive contradictions of capitalism, conflict would spread. The proletariat, neither in nor of the world, would inherit the world. But History (to use these personifications) confounded Marx's prophecy, at least in the West. The law of increasing misery was refuted by the tremendous advances of technology. The trade union began bettering the worker's lot. And, in the political struggles that followed, it found that it could sustain itself not by becoming a revolutionary instrument against society, but by accepting a place within society.

In the America of the nineteenth century, almost every social movement had involved an effort by the worker to escape his lot as a worker. At times the solution was free land, or cheap money, or producers' cooperatives, or some other chimera from the gaudy bag of utopian dreams. The rise of the American Federation of Labor signaled the end of this drive for some new "northwest passage." Under Gompers, labor's single ambition was to achieve a status on a par with that of business and the church, as a "legitimate" social institution of American life. The socialists within and without the

A.F.L. challenged this approach, and lost. As a result, before World War I they found themselves isolated from the labor movement which they regarded as necessary for the fulfillment of socialism. During the New Deal and after, however, the socialists in the unions, faced with a similar dilemma, chose the labor movement. When the Socialist Party refused to go along, it lost its strength as a tangible force in American political life.

But even apart from its presumed relation to socialism, perhaps the most significant fact regarding the "consciousness" of the American proletariat is that in the past thirty years American middle-class mass culture has triumphed over capitalist and worker alike. The America of 1890, the capstone of the Gilded Age, was a society of increasing differentiation in manners and morals, the area, that is, of *visible* distinction and the one that could give rise, as in Europe, to class resentment. It saw the emergence in baroque mansion, elaborate dress, and refined leisure activities of a new *haut* style of life. By the 1920's this style was already gone. Beneath this change was the transformation of entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism, with a corresponding shift in the social type from the self-made man to the smooth, faceless manager. But beyond that it was a change in the very character of society, symbolized in large measure by the adjective which qualified the phrases "mass production" and "mass consumption." Production — apart from war needs — was no longer geared *primarily*, as it had been in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to turning out capital goods (steel, railroad equipment, tools), but to the output of consumers' durable goods (autos, washing machines, radios, etc.). The mass market became the arbiter of taste, and the style of life was leveled. In another dimension of this vast social revolution that has been taking place during the past quarter of a century, professional skill has been replacing property as the chief means of acquiring and wielding power, and the educational system rather than inheritance has become the chief avenue for social ascent. In short, a new-type, bureaucratic, mass society has been emerging, and with it, new institutions, of which the modern trade union is one. If the worker was "absorbed" culturally into the social structure of this new, bureaucratic mass society, the trade union itself finally achieved its respectability.

World War II brought a social truce and the beginnings of a social merger between the major power blocs in American life. "Labor" was living in and of the capitalist society. It was represented on government boards and was consulted on policy. The rise of totalitarianism demonstrated that all social groups had a common fate if democracy fell. In this respect all other values have become subordinate. And the emergence of a garrison economy as a response to the threat of a third world war illustrated the need

for some defined national interest in the form of government decision to bring the particular self-interest groups to heel.

For the fast-dwindling Socialist Party the answer to this new dilemma was still a "third force," or a "neither-nor" position which sought to stand apart and outside the swirling sandstorm of conflict. Like the ostrich in the Slavic parable, they put their heads in the sand and thought no one was looking. By 1950, nobody was.

For the twentieth-century communist, however, there are none of these agonizing problems of ethics and politics. He is the perpetual alien living in hostile enemy territory. Any gesture of support, any pressure for social reform — all of these are simply tactics, a set of Potemkin villages, the façades to be torn down after the necessary moment for deception has passed. His is the ethic of "ultimate ends"; only the goal counts, the means are inconsequential. Bolshevism thus is neither in the world nor of it, but stands outside. It takes no responsibility for the consequences of any act within the society nor does it suffer the tension of acquiescence or rejection. But the socialist, unlike the communist, lacks that fanatical vision, and so faces the daily anguish of participating in and sharing responsibility for the day-to-day problems of the society.

It is this commitment to the "absolute" that gives bolshevism its religious strength. It is this commitment which sustains one of the great political myths of the century, the myth of the iron-willed Bolshevik. Selfless, devoted, resourceful, a man with a cause, he is the modern Hero. He alone, a man of action, a soldier for the future, continues the tradition of courage which is the aristocratic heritage bestowed on Western culture and which has been devitalized by the narrow, monetary calculus of the bourgeoisie. (Can the businessman be the Hero?) Such is the peculiar myth which has taken a deep hold among many intellectuals. It is a myth which is also responsible for a deep emotional hatred and almost pathologic resentment felt most keenly by the ex-communist intellectual, the "defrocked priest," toward the party. For the "Bolshevik," through the myth of absolute selflessness, claims to be the "extreme man," the man of no compromise, the man of purity. The intellectual, driven to be moral, fears the comparison and resents the claim. He thus bears either a sense of guilt or a psychological wound.

In addition to the myth of the Bolshevik as iron-willed Hero, twentieth-century communism has made several other distinctive contributions to the theory and practice of modern politics. Like so many other social doctrines, these were never put down systematically in a fully self-conscious fashion; yet over the years they have emerged as a coherent philosophy. Of these con-

tributions some five can be linked schematically. These are central for understanding the history of the Communist Party in this country and are summarized here.

One of the major innovations of the Bolsheviks is their theory of power. Against the nineteenth-century liberal view which saw social decisions as a reconciliation of diverse interests through compromise and consensus — a theory which social democracy gradually began to accept after World War I when it was called upon to take responsibility for governments and enter coalitions — the Bolsheviks saw politics as a naked struggle for power, power being defined as a monopoly of the means of coercion. Power was thought of almost in the sense of physics, its equation being almost literally mass times force equals power. The individual, while central to a market society, was for the Bolshevik a helpless entity. Only the organized group counted, and only a mass base could exert social leverage in society.

But a mass requires leadership. The great unresolved dilemma of Marxian sociology was the question of how the proletariat achieves the consciousness of its role. To await the immanent development of history was to rely on the fallacy of misplaced abstraction. "Spontaneity" was not for Lenin a reality in mass politics; nor was the trade union an effective instrument. His answer, the most significant addition to revolutionary theory, was the vanguard role of the party.

Against "economism" which glorified the role of the trade union, Lenin argued that the mere organization of society on a trade-union basis could only lead to wage consciousness, not revolutionary consciousness; against the spontaneity theories of Rosa Luxemburg he argued that the masses, by nature, were backward. Only the vanguard party, aware of the precarious balance of social forces, could assess the play and correctly tip the scales in the revolutionary direction. The classic formulation of revolutionary avant-gardism Lenin outlined in his *What Is to Be Done*, published as early as 1903.

In it he wrote that without the "dozen" tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundred), professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle. "I assert," said Lenin, "(1) that no movement can be durable without a stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity; (2) that the more widely the masses are spontaneously drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement, the more necessary it is to have such an organization and the more stable must it be (for it is much easier for demagogues to sidetrack the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that the organization must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolution as a profession."

If the party were to become a vanguard, it needed discipline in action, and thus there arose the principle of party hierarchy and "democratic centralism." In theory there was full discussion of policy before decision, and rigid adherence to policy once discussion had been closed. In practice a line was laid down by the leadership which was binding on all. Lenin's promulgation of these doctrines split Russian socialism in 1903 and brought about the emergence of the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions. In the beginning Trotsky opposed Lenin's ideas, but later he capitulated. As he reveals in his autobiography: ". . . there is no doubt that at that time I did not fully realize what an intense and imperious centralism the revolutionary party would need to lead millions of people in a war against the old order. . . . Revolutionary centralism is a harsh, imperative and extracting principle. It often takes the guise of absolute ruthlessness in its relation to individual members, to whole groups of former associates. It is not without significance that the words 'irreconcilable' and 'relentless' are among Lenin's favorites."

From the principle of power and the theory of party organization rose two other key tenets of bolshevism. One was the polarization of classes. Because it looked only toward the "final conflict," bolshevism split society into two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. But the proletariat could only be emancipated by the vanguard party; hence anyone resisting the party must belong to the enemy. For Lenin, the maxim of the absolute ethic meant that "those who are not for me are against me." Hence, too, a formulation of the theory of "social fascism," which in the early 1930's branded the social democrats rather than Hitler as the chief enemy, and led the communists to unite, in several instances, with the Nazis in order to overthrow the German Republic.

The second tenet, deriving from the backward nature of the masses, was the key psychological tactic of formulating all policy into forceful slogans. Slogans dramatize events, make issues simple, and wipe out the qualifications, nuances, and subtleties which accompany democratic political action. In his chapter on slogans, Lenin wrote one of the first manuals on modern mass psychology. During the revolution, the Bolsheviks achieved a flexibility of tactic by using such slogans as "All Power to the Soviets," "Land, Peace, and Bread," etc. The basic political tactic of all Communist parties everywhere is to formulate policy primarily through the use of key slogans which are transmitted first to the party rank and file and then to the masses.

The consequence of the theory of the vanguard party and its relation to the masses is a system of "two truths," the *consilia evangelica*, or a special ethic endowed for those whose lives are so dedicated to the revolutionary ends, and another truth for the masses. Out of this belief grew Lenin's fa-

mous admonition — one can lie, steal, or cheat, for the cause itself has a higher truth.

Communism as a social movement did not, with the brief exception of the late 1930's, achieve any sizable mass following in the United States. Its main appeal, then, was to the dispossessed intelligentsia of the depression generation and to the "engineers of the future" who were captivated by the type of elitist appeal just described. Within American life, its influence was oblique. It stirred many Americans to action against injustices, and left them with burnt fingers when, for reasons of expediency, the party line changed and the cause was dropped. It provided unmatched political sophistication to a generation that went through its ranks and gave to an easygoing, tolerant, sprawling America a lesson in organizational manipulation and hard-bitten ideological devotion which this country, because of tradition and temperament, found hard to understand. But most of all, through the seeds of distrust and anxiety it sowed, communism has spawned a reaction, an hysteria and bitterness that democratic America may find difficult to erase in the rugged years ahead.

Thus within the span of a century American socialism passed from those bright and unbounded dreams of social justice which possessed the utopians and early Marxians alike to — in the deeds of one bastard faction at least — a nightmare of distrust and bitterness.

FROM "GENERAL-INTEREST" TO "SPECIAL-INTEREST" POLITICS

An era that featured or produced cubism, Coué, Capone, the Klan, the Charleston, the chemise, speakeasies, tommy-guns, and Teapot Dome — as well as the only paternity case ever to have emerged from the White House — hardly deserves the designation "Normalcy" which the hapless Warren Harding bestowed upon it. If one looks beyond the "politics-as-usual," "business-as-usual" tone that seems to have dominated government, there is much about the 'twenties that makes that period appear remarkably dynamic and germinal. Historians are now rescuing the 'twenties from its "retrograde" reputation. George Mowry, for example, has described the period as "one of the major formulative epochs in American history"; he points to the ascendancy of the urban "cast of mind," to the reorientation of American industry to mass-marketing needs, to technological changes, and to the revolution in sexual mores. [*The Twenties: Fords, Flappers, and Fanatics* (1963).]

In the article that follows, Arthur Link (Professor of History, Princeton University) shows the way toward a possible rehabilitation of the political history of the era as well. Mr. Link produces evidence that the progressive movement was very much alive in the 1920's though, to be sure, its successes were few. The continued presence of large numbers of reformers in Congress, and in state and city administrations, represents one type of evidence of this nature. The vigorous promotion of agricultural relief measures and of public power projects constitutes another.

His inclusion of Prohibition and of immigration restriction among progressive successes reminds us that progressive objectives were not always liberal objectives. Unfortunately, Mr. Link makes no further distinctions among reform impulses, in the nature of noting, for example, that not all reform objectives were progressive objectives. To discover what happened to the progressive movement in the 'twenties, he defines progressivism simply as "the popular effort which began convulsively in the 1890's and waxed and waned afterward to our own time, to insure the survival of democracy in the United States by the enlargement of governmental power to control and offset the power of private economic groups over the nation's institutions and life." Mr. Link himself reveals one inadequacy in this definition when he points out the vital role of business groups within the progressive movement; it may be contended that such groups sought in fact to

"offset the power" of other, presumably more powerful, "private economic groups," but the problem of greater or lesser power makes such a definition clumsy and vitiates its usefulness. Above all, it is too inclusive; for it describes "the normal and ordinary political behavior of groups and classes" (to use Mr. Link's own phrase) *not only* for the period beginning in 1890 and including the 'twenties, but for the entire duration of American political history. It thereby misses the distinctiveness of the dominant reform movement of the first ten or fifteen years of the 20th Century, which by convention has earned the cognomen "progressive."

That distinctiveness Mr. Link alludes to when he mentions the altruistic motivation "even of the special interest groups" within the progressive coalition; it was the rhetoric and self-conviction of selflessness among the reform groups that served to relieve tensions within the movement and to elevate certain common objectives to the level of principles. Whatever else it may have stood for, the progressive movement pre-eminently disavowed the legitimacy of special-interest or pressure-group politics. Although it is probably true that by 1913, as Mr. Link says, "the work of special interest groups or classes seeking greater political status and economic security" had become the progressive movement's "most important characteristic," it was characteristic of the progressives themselves — whether they were businessmen, farmers, or professionals — that they refused to recognize this fact and fervently fought all measures that they could not fit within the "general interest" rubric. This characteristic above all distinguishes the progressive from the reformer of other eras and other causes.

One may well explain a great deal about the progressives' demoralization after 1918 by noting their discovery of the fragility of their "general-interest politics" hypothesis. The notion of a "general interest" tends to exclude new, inchoate, and innovative interests. It is a static idea which in any long view suggests the preclusion of new consensuses. In the long run, therefore, it is inappropriate for an open and mobile society such as ours. As an activating political "myth," it served the progressive cause well for nearly a generation. But, as Eric Goldman has brought out, once fictions come to be known as fictions they lose their power. "Once your own movement as well as the other fellow's is stripped of the Truth and the Good . . . the trouble comes." [*Rendezvous with Destiny* (1953) 313, 200.] The progressive movement leaned heavily on such fictional absolutes. When they went, progressivism collapsed.

Though progressivism did survive in the 'twenties in many of the ways that Mr. Link says it did, most of the reform thrusts were of a different character. Deprived of its principal rationale, and deserted by the intellectuals, the progressive movement fragmented into its constituent elements, each self-consciously assertive of its own special interest. (The Farm Bloc, especially, followed this path; Mr. Link credits it — inappropriately — with much of what he calls "progressive" in the 'twenties.) Perhaps even more important, the major energies

for reform now came from sources that, at least until 1915, had played no significant part in the movement; namely, the ethnic minority groups, centered especially in the big cities. Al Smith symbolized this development, just as Bryan and William McAdoo, Smith's great Democratic antagonists, symbolized the expiring progressive impulse of the 'twenties.

W. E. Leuchtenburg's *Perils of Prosperity* (1958) is a balanced synthesis of the 'twenties that emphasizes the anti-progressive tone of the era even as it notes certain of the remaining progressive impulses. J. J. Huthmacher's "Urban Liberalism and the Age of Reform," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIX (Sept. 1962) is an often cited but unconvincing effort to establish the "progressiveness" of urban minority groups in the progressive era. D. Burner's "The Breakup of the Wilson Coalition of 1916," *Mid-America*, XLV (Jan. 1963), and S. W. Livermore, "The Sectional Issue in the 1918 Congressional Election," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXV (June 1948), treat some of the political reasons for the old-guard Republican return to power after 1918.

What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?

ARTHUR S. LINK

If the day has not yet arrived when we can make a definite synthesis of political developments between the Armistice and the Great Depression, it is surely high time for historians to begin to clear away the accumulated heap of mistaken and half-mistaken hypotheses about this important transitional period. Writing often without fear or much research (to paraphrase Carl Becker's remark), we recent American historians have gone on indefatigably to perpetuate hypotheses that either reflected the disillusionment and despair of contemporaries, or once served their purpose in exposing the alleged hiatus in the great continuum of twentieth-century reform.

Stated briefly, the following are what might be called the governing hypotheses of the period under discussion: The 1920's were a period made

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almost unique by an extraordinary reaction against idealism and reform. They were a time when the political representatives of big business and Wall Street executed a relentless and successful campaign in state and nation to subvert the regulatory structure that had been built at the cost of so much toil and sweat since the 1870's, and to restore a Hanna-like reign of special privilege to benefit business, industry, and finance. The surging tides of nationalism and mass hatreds generated by World War I continued to engulf the land and were manifested, among other things, in fear of communism, suppression of civil liberties, revival of nativism and anti-Semitism most crudely exemplified by the Ku Klux Klan, and in the triumph of racism and prejudice in immigration legislation. The 1920's were an era when great traditions and ideals were repudiated or forgotten, when the American people, propelled by a crass materialism in their scramble for wealth, uttered a curse on twenty-five years of reform endeavor. As a result, progressives were stunned and everywhere in retreat along the entire political front, their forces disorganized and leaderless, their movement shattered, their dreams of a new America turned into agonizing nightmares.

To be sure, the total picture that emerges from these generalizations is overdrawn. Yet it seems fair to say that leading historians have advanced each of these generalizations, that the total picture is the one that most of us younger historians saw during the years of our training, and that these hypotheses to a greater or lesser degree still control the way in which we write and teach about the 1920's, as a reading of textbooks and general works will quickly show.

This paper has not been written, however, to quarrel with anyone or to make an indictment. Its purposes are, first, to attempt to determine the degree to which the governing hypotheses, as stated, are adequate or inadequate to explain the political phenomena of the period, and, second, to discover whether any new and sounder hypotheses might be suggested. Such an effort, of course, must be tentative and above all imperfect in view of the absence of sufficient foundations for a synthesis.

Happily, however, we do not have to proceed entirely in the dark. Historians young and old, but mostly young, have already discovered that the period of the 1920's is the exciting new frontier of American historical research and that its opportunities are almost limitless in view of the mass of manuscript materials that are becoming available. Thus we have (the following examples are mentioned only at random) excellent recent studies of agrarian discontent and farm movements by Theodore Saloutos, John D. Hicks, Gilbert C. Fite, Robert L. Morlan, and James H. Shideler; of nativism and problems of immigration and assimilation by John Higham, Oscar Handlin, Robert A. Devine, and Edmund D. Cronon; of intel-

lectual currents, the social gospel, and religious controversies by Henry F. May, Paul A. Carter, Robert M. Miller, and Norman F. Furniss; of left-wing politics and labor developments by Theodore Draper, David A. Shannon, Daniel Bell, Paul M. Angle, and Matthew Josephson; of the campaign of 1928 by Edmund A. Moore; and of political and judicial leaders by Alpheus T. Mason, Frank Freidel, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Merlo J. Pusey, and Joel F. Paschal.¹ Moreover, we can look forward to the early publication of studies that will be equally illuminating for the period, like the biographies of George W. Norris, Thomas J. Walsh, and Albert B. Fall now being prepared by Richard Lowitt, Leonard Bates, and David Stratton, respectively, and the recently completed study of the campaign and election of 1920 by Wesley M. Bagby.²

Obviously, we are not only at a point in the progress of our research into the political history of the 1920's when we can begin to generalize, but we have reached the time when we should attempt to find some consensus, however tentative it must now be, concerning the larger political dimensions and meanings of the period.

¹ Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, *Agrarian Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939* (Madison, Wis., 1951); Gilbert C. Fite, *Peter Norbeck: Prairie Statesman* (Columbia, Mo., 1948), and *George N. Peek and the Fight for Farm Parity* (Norman, Okla., 1954); Robert L. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1955); James H. Shideler, *Farm Crisis, 1919-1923* (Berkeley, Calif., 1957); John H. Igham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1955); Oscar Handlin, *The American People in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954); Robert A. Devine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (New Haven, Conn., 1957); Edmund D. Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison, Wis., 1955); Henry F. May, "Shifting Perspectives on the 1920's," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIII (Dec., 1956), 405-27; Paul A. Carter, *The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1956); Robert M. Miller, "An Inquiry into the Social Attitudes of American Protestantism, 1919-1939," doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1955; Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* (New Haven, Conn., 1954); Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York, 1957); David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America: A History* (New York, 1955); Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," *Socialism and American Life*, ed. Donald D. Egbert and Stow Persons (2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1952), I, 215-405; Paul M. Angle, *Bloody Williamson* (New York, 1952); Matthew Josephson, *Sidney Hillman: Statesman of American Labor* (New York, 1952); Edmund A. Moore, *A Catholic Runs for President: The Campaign of 1928* (New York, 1956); Alpheus Thomas Mason, *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life* (New York, 1946), and *Harlan Fiske Stone: Pillar of the Law* (New York, 1956); Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal* (Boston, 1954); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order* (Boston, 1957); Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes* (2 vols., New York, 1951); Joel Francis Paschal, *Mr. Justice Sutherland: A Man against the State* (Princeton, N.J., 1951).

² Wesley M. Bagby, "Woodrow Wilson and the Great Debacle of 1920," MS in the possession of Professor Bagby; see also his "The 'Smoke-Filled Room' and the Nomination of Warren C. Harding," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLI (Mar., 1955), 657-74, and "Woodrow Wilson, a Third Term, and the Solemn Referendum," *American Historical Review*, LX (Apr., 1955), 567-75.

In answering the question of what happened to the progressive movement in the 1920's, we should begin by looking briefly at some fundamental facts about the movement before 1918, facts that in large measure predetermined its fate in the 1920's, given the political climate and circumstances that prevailed.

The first of these was the elementary fact that the progressive movement never really existed as a recognizable organization with common goals and a political machinery geared to achieve them. Generally speaking (and for the purposes of this paper), progressivism might be defined as the popular effort, which began convulsively in the 1890's and waxed and waned afterward to our own time, to insure the survival of democracy in the United States by the enlargement of governmental power to control and offset the power of private economic groups over the nation's institutions and life. Actually, of course, from the 1890's on there were many "progressive" movements on many levels seeking sometimes contradictory objectives. Not all, but most of these campaigns were the work of special interest groups or classes seeking greater political status and economic security. This was true from the beginning of the progressive movement in the 1890's; by 1913 it was that movement's most important characteristic.

The second fundamental fact — that the progressive movements were often largely middle class in constituency and orientation — is of course well known, but an important corollary has often been ignored. It was that several of the most important reform movements were inspired, staffed, and led by businessmen with very specific or special-interest objectives in view. Because they hated waste, mismanagement, and high taxes, they, together with their friends in the legal profession, often furnished the leadership of good government campaigns. Because they feared industrial monopoly, abuse of power by railroads, and the growth of financial oligarchy, they were the backbone of the movements that culminated in the adoption of the Hepburn and later acts for railroad regulation, the Federal Reserve Act, and the Federal Trade Commission Act. Among the many consequences of their participation in the progressive movement, two should be mentioned because of their significance for developments in the 1920's: First, the strong identification of businessmen with good government and economic reforms for which the general public also had a lively concern helped preserve the good reputation of the middle-class business community (as opposed to its alleged natural enemies, monopolists, malefactors of great wealth, and railroad barons) and helped to direct the energies of the progressive movement toward the strengthening instead of the shackling of the business community. Second, their activities and influence served to intensify the tensions within the broad reform movement, because they often opposed

the demands of farm groups, labor unions, and advocates of social justice.

The third remark to be made about the progressive movement before 1918 is that despite its actual diversity and inner tensions it did seem to have unity; that is, it seemed to share common ideals and objectives. This was true in part because much of the motivation even of the special-interest groups was altruistic (at least they succeeded in convincing themselves that they sought the welfare of society rather than their own interests primarily); in part because political leadership generally succeeded in subordinating inner tensions. It was true, above all, because there were in fact important idealistic elements in the progressive ranks — social gospel leaders, social justice elements, and intellectuals and philosophers — who worked hard at the task of defining and elevating common principles and goals.

Fourth and finally, the substantial progressive achievements before 1918 had been gained, at least on the federal level, only because of the temporary dislocations of the national political structure caused by successive popular uprisings, not because progressives had found or created a viable organization for perpetuating their control. Or, to put the matter another way, before 1918 the various progressive elements had failed to destroy the existing party structure by organizing a national party of their own that could survive. They, or at least many of them, tried in 1912; and it seemed for a time in 1916 that Woodrow Wilson had succeeded in drawing the important progressive groups permanently into the Democratic party. But Wilson's accomplishment did not survive even to the end of the war, and by 1920 traditional partisan loyalties were reasserting themselves with extraordinary vigor.

With this introduction, we can now ask what happened to the progressive movement or movements in the 1920's. Surely no one would contend that after 1916 the political scene did not change significantly, both on the state and national levels. There was the seemingly obvious fact that the Wilsonian coalition had been wrecked by the election of 1920, and that the progressive elements were divided and afterward unable to agree upon a program or to control the national government. There was the even more "obvious" fact that conservative Republican presidents and their cabinets controlled the executive branch throughout the period. There was Congress, as Eric F. Goldman had said, allegedly whooping through procorporation legislation, and the Supreme Court interpreting the New Freedom laws in a way that harassed unions and encouraged trusts.³ There were, to outraged idealists and intellectuals, the more disgusting spectacles of Red hunts, mass arrests and deportations, the survival deep into the 1920's of arrogant nationalism, crusades against the teaching of evolution, the attempted sup-

³ Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny* (New York, 1953), 284. The "allegedly" in this sentence is mine, not Professor Goldman's.

pression of the right to drink, and myriad other manifestations of what would now be called a repressive reaction.⁴

Like the hypotheses suggested at the beginning, this picture is overdrawn in some particulars. But it is accurate in part, for progressivism was certainly on the downgrade if not in decay after 1918. This is an obvious fact that needs explanation and understanding rather than elaborate proof. We can go a long way toward answering our question if we can explain, at least partially, the extraordinary complex developments that converge to produce the "obvious" result.

For this explanation we must begin by looking at the several progressive elements and their relation to each other and to the two major parties after 1916. Since national progressivism was never an organized or independent movement (except imperfectly and then only temporarily in 1912), it could succeed only when its constituent elements formed a coalition strong enough to control one of the major parties. This had happened in 1916, when southern and western farmers, organized labor, the social justice elements, and a large part of the independent radicals who had heretofore voted the Socialist ticket coalesced to continue the control of Wilson and the Democratic party.

The important fact about the progressive coalition of 1916, however, was not its strength but its weakness. It was not a new party but a temporary alliance, welded in the heat of the most extraordinary domestic and external events. To be sure, it functioned for the most part successfully during the war, in providing the necessary support for a program of heavy taxation, relatively stringent controls over business and industry, and extensive new benefits to labor. Surviving in a crippled way even in the months following the Armistice, it put across a program that constituted a sizable triumph for the progressive movement — continued heavy taxation, the Transportation Act of 1920, the culmination of the long fight for railroad regulation, a new child labor act, amendments for prohibition and woman suffrage, immigration restriction, and water power and conservation legislation.

Even so, the progressive coalition of 1916 was inherently unstable. Indeed, it was so wracked by inner tensions that it could not survive, and destruction came inexorably, it seemed systematically, from 1917 to 1920. Why was this true?

First, the independent radicals and antiwar agrarians were alienated by the war declaration and the government's suppression of dissent and civil liberties during the war and the Red scare. Organized labor was disaffected

⁴H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (Norman, Okla., 1957); Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1955).

by the administration's coercion of the coal miners in 1919, its lukewarm if not hostile attitude during the great strikes of 1919 and 1920, and its failure to support the Plumb Plan for nationalization of the railroads. Isolationists and idealists were outraged by what they thought was the President's betrayal of American traditions or the liberal peace program at Paris. These tensions were strong enough to disrupt the coalition, but a final one would have been fatal even if the others had never existed. This was the alienation of farmers in the Plains and western states produced by the administration's refusal to impose price controls on cotton while it maintained ceilings on the prices of other agricultural commodities,⁵ and especially by the administration's failure to do anything decisive to stem the downward plunge of farm prices that began in the summer of 1920.⁶ Under the impact of all these stresses, the Wilsonian coalition gradually disintegrated from 1917 to 1920 and disappeared entirely during the campaign of 1920.

The progressive coalition was thus destroyed, but the components of a potential movement remained. As we will see, these elements were neither inactive nor entirely unsuccessful in the 1920's. But they obviously failed to find common principles and a program, much less to unite effectively for political action on a national scale. I suggest that this was true, in part at least, for the following reasons:

First, the progressive elements could never create or gain control of a political organization capable of carrying them into national office. The Republican party was patently an impossible instrument because control of the GOP was too much in the hands of the eastern and midwestern industrial, oil, and financial interests, as it had been since about 1910. There was always the hope of a third party. Several progressive groups — insurgent midwestern Republicans, the railroad brotherhoods, a segment of the AF of L, and the moderate Socialists under Robert M. La Follette — tried to realize this goal in 1924, only to discover that third party movements in the United States are doomed to failure except in periods of enormous national turmoil, and that the 1920's were not such a time. Thus the Democratic party remained the only vehicle that conceivably could have been used by a new progressive coalition. But that party was simply not capable of such service in the 1920's. It was so torn by conflicts between its eastern, big city wing and its southern and western rural majority that it literally ceased to be a national party. It remained strong in its sectional and metropolitan components, but

⁵ On this point, see Seward W. Livermore, "The Sectional Issue in the 1918 Congressional Elections," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXV (June, 1948), 29-60.

⁶ Arthur S. Link, "The Federal Reserve Policy and the Agricultural Depression of 1920-1921," *Agricultural History*, XX (July, 1946), 166-75; and Herbert F. Margulies, "The Election of 1920 in Wisconsin: The Return to 'Normalcy' Reappraised," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XXXVIII (Autumn, 1954), 15-22.

it was so divided that it barely succeeded in nominating a presidential candidate at all in 1924 and nominated one in 1928 only at the cost of temporary disruption.⁷

Progressivism declined in the 1920's, in the second place, because, as has been suggested, the tensions that had wrecked the coalition of 1916 not only persisted but actually grew in number and intensity. The two most numerous progressive elements, the southern and western farmers, strongly supported the Eighteenth Amendment, were heavily tinged with nativism and therefore supported immigration restriction, were either members of, friendly to, or politically afraid of the Ku Klux Klan, and demanded as the principal plank in their platform legislation to guarantee them a larger share of the national income. On all these points and issues the lower and lower middle classes in the large cities stood in direct and often violent opposition to their potential allies in the rural areas. Moreover, the liaison between the farm groups and organized labor, which had been productive of much significant legislation during the Wilson period, virtually ceased to exist in the 1920's. There were many reasons for this development, and I mention only one — the fact that the preeminent spokesmen of farmers in the 1920's, the new Farm Bureau Federation, represented the larger commercial farmers who (in contrast to the members of the leading farm organization in Wilson's day, the National Farmers' Union) were often employers themselves and felt no identification with the rank and file of labor.

It was little wonder, therefore (and this is a third reason for the weakness of progressivism in the 1920's), that the tension-ridden progressive groups were never able to agree upon a program that, like the Democratic platform of 1916, could provide the basis for a revived coalition. So long as progressive groups fought one another more fiercely than they fought their natural opponents, such agreement was impossible; and so long as common goals were impossible to achieve, a national progressive movement could not take effective form. Nothing illustrates this better than the failure of the Democratic conventions of 1924 and 1928 to adopt platforms that could rally and unite the discontented elements. One result, among others, was that southern farmers voted as Democrats and western farmers as Republicans. And, as Professor Frank Freidel once commented to the author, much of the failure of progressivism in the 1920's can be explained by this elementary fact.

A deeper reason for the failure of progressives to unite ideologically in the 1920's was what might be called a substantial paralysis of the progressive mind. This was partly the result of the repudiation of progressive ideals by

⁷ For a highly partisan account of these events see Karl Schriftgiesser, *This Was Normalcy* (Boston, 1948). More balanced are the already cited Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal*, and Schlesinger, *The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order*.

many intellectuals and the defection from the progressive movement of the urban middle classes and professional groups, as will be demonstrated. It was the result, even more importantly, of the fact that progressivism as an organized body of political thought found itself at a crossroads in the 1920's, like progressivism today, and did not know which way to turn. The major objectives of the progressive movement of the prewar years had in fact been largely achieved by 1920. In what direction should progressivism now move? Should it remain in the channels already deeply cut by its own traditions, and, while giving sincere allegiance to the ideal of democratic capitalism, work for more comprehensive programs of business regulation and assistance to disadvantaged classes like farmers and submerged industrial workers? Should it abandon these traditions and, like most similar European movements, take the road toward a moderate socialism with a predominantly labor orientation? Should it attempt merely to revive the goals of more democracy through changes in the political machinery? Or should it become mainly an agrarian movement with purely agrarian goals?

These were real dilemmas, not academic ones, and one can see numerous examples of how they confused and almost paralyzed progressives in the 1920's. The platform of La Follette's Progressive party of 1924 offers one revealing illustration. It embodied much that was old and meaningless by this time (the direct election of the president and a national referendum before the adoption of a war resolution, for example) and little that had any real significance for the future.⁸ And yet it was the best that a vigorous and idealistic movement could offer. A second example was the plight of the agrarians and insurgents in Congress who fought so hard all through the 1920's against Andrew Mellon's proposals to abolish the inheritance tax and to make drastic reductions in the taxes on large incomes. In view of the rapid reduction of the federal debt, the progressives were hard pressed to justify the continuation of nearly confiscatory tax levels, simply because few of them realized the wide social and economic uses to which the income tax could be put. Lacking any programs for the redistribution of the national income (except to farmers), they were plagued and overwhelmed by the surpluses in the federal Treasury until, for want of any good arguments, they finally gave Secretary Andrew Mellon the legislation he had been demanding.⁹ A third and final example of this virtual paralysis of the progressive mind was perhaps the most revealing of all. It was the attempt that Wood-

⁸ For a different picture see Belle C. La Follette and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette* (2 vols., New York, 1953); and Russel B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics, 1870-1950* (East Lansing, Mich., 1951). Both works contribute to an understanding of progressive politics in the 1920's.

⁹ Here indebtedness is acknowledged to Sidney Ratner, *American Taxation: Its History as a Social Force in Democracy* (New York, 1942).

row Wilson, Louis D. Brandeis, and other Democratic leaders made from 1921 to 1924 to draft a new charter for progressivism. Except for its inevitable proposals for an idealistic world leadership, the document that emerged from this interchange included little or nothing that would have sounded new to a western progressive in 1912.

A fourth reason for the disintegration and decline of the progressive movement in the 1920's was the lack of any effective leadership. Given the political temper and circumstances of the 1920's, it is possible that such leadership could not have operated successfully in any event. Perhaps the various progressive elements were so mutually hostile and so self-centered in interests and objectives that even a Theodore Roosevelt or a Woodrow Wilson, had they been at the zenith of their powers in the 1920's, could not have drawn them together in a common front. We will never know what a strong national leader might have done because by a trick of fate no such leader emerged before Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Four factors, then, contributed to the failure of the progressive components to unite successfully after 1918 and, as things turned out, before 1932: the lack of a suitable political vehicle, the severity of the tensions that kept progressives apart, the failure of progressives to agree upon a common program, and the absence of a national leadership, without which a united movement could never be created and sustained. These were all weaknesses that stemmed to a large degree from the instability and failures of the progressive movement itself.

There were, besides, a number of what might be called external causes for the movement's decline. In considering them one must begin with what was seemingly the most important — the alleged fact that the 1920's were a very unpropitious time for any new progressive revolt because of the ever-increasing level of economic prosperity, the materialism, and the general contentment of the decade 1919 to 1929. Part of this generalization is valid when applied to specific elements in the population. For example, the rapid rise in the real wages of industrial workers, coupled with generally full employment and the spread of so-called welfare practices among management, certainly did much to weaken and avert the further spread of organized labor, and thus to debilitate one of the important progressive components. But to say that it was prosperity per se that created a climate unfriendly to progressive ideals would be inaccurate. There was little prosperity and much depression during the 1920's for the single largest economic group, the farmers, as well as for numerous other groups. Progressivism, moreover, can flourish as much during periods of prosperity as during periods of discontent, as the history of the development of the progressive movement from 1901 to 1917 and of its triumph from 1945 to 1956 prove.

Vastly more important among the external factors in the decline of progressivism was the widespread, almost wholesale, defection from its ranks of the middle classes — the middling businessmen, bankers, and manufacturers, and the professional people closely associated with them in ideals and habits — in American cities large and small. For an understanding of this phenomenon no simple explanations like “prosperity” or the “temper of the times” will suffice, although they give some insight. The important fact was that these groups found a new economic and social status as a consequence of the flowering of American enterprise under the impact of the technological, financial, and other revolutions of the 1920’s. If, as Professor Richard Hofstadter had claimed,¹⁰ the urban middle classes were progressive (that is, they demanded governmental relief from various anxieties) in the early 1900’s because they resented their loss of social prestige to the *nouveaux riches* and feared being ground under by monopolists in industry, banking, and labor — if this is true, then the urban middle classes were not progressive in the 1920’s for inverse reasons. Their temper was dynamic, expansive, and supremely confident. They knew that they were building a new America, a business civilization based not upon monopoly and restriction but upon a whole new set of business values — mass production and consumption, short hours and high wages, full employment, welfare capitalism. And what was more important, virtually the entire country (at least the journalists, writers in popular magazines, and many preachers and professors) acknowledged that the nation’s destiny was in good hands. It was little wonder, therefore, that the whole complex of groups constituting the urban middle classes, whether in New York, Zenith, or Middletown, had little interest in rebellion or even in mild reform proposals that seemed to imperil their leadership and control.

Other important factors, of course, contributed to the contentment of the urban middle classes. The professionalization of business and the full-blown emergence of a large managerial class had a profound impact upon social and political ideals. The acceleration of mass advertising played its role, as did also the beginning disintegration of the great cities with the spread of middle- and upper-middle-class suburbs, a factor that diffused the remaining reform energies among the urban leaders.

A second external factor in the decline of the progressive movement after 1918 was the desertion from its ranks of a good part of the intellectual leadership of the country. Indeed, more than simple desertion was involved here; it was often a matter of a cynical repudiation of the ideals from which progressivism derived its strength. I do not mean to imply too much by this

¹⁰ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York, 1955), 131 ff.

generalization. I know that what has been called intellectual progressivism not only survived in the 1920's but actually flourished in many fields.¹¹ I know that the intellectual foundations of our present quasi-welfare state were either being laid or reinforced during the decade. Even so, one cannot evade the conclusion that the intellectual-political climate of the 1920's was vastly different from the one that had prevailed in the preceding two decades.

During the years of the great progressive revolt, intellectuals — novelists, journalists, political thinkers, social scientists, historians, and the like — had made a deeply personal commitment to the cause of democracy, first in domestic and then in foreign affairs. Their leadership in and impact on many phases of the progressive movement had been profound. By contrast, in the 1920's a large body of this intellectual phalanx turned against the very ideals they had once deified. One could cite, for example, the reaction of the idealists against the Versailles settlement; the disenchantment of the intellectuals with the extension of government authority when it could be used to justify the Eighteenth Amendment or the suppression of free speech; or the inevitable loss of faith in the "people" when en masse they hounded so-called radicals, joined Bryan's crusade against evolution, or regaled themselves as Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Whatever the cause, many alienated intellectuals simply withdrew or repudiated any identification with the groups they had once helped to lead. The result was not fatal to progressivism, but it was serious. The spark plugs had been removed from the engine of reform.

The progressive movement, then, unquestionably declined, but was it defunct in the 1920's? Much, of course, depends upon the definition of terms. If we accept the usual definition for "defunct" as "dead" or "ceasing to have any life or strength," we must recognize that the progressive movement was certainly not defunct in the 1920's; that on the contrary at least important parts of it were very much alive; and that it is just as important to know how and why progressivism survived as it is to know how and why it declined.

To state the matter briefly, progressivism survived in the 1920's because several important elements of the movement remained either in full vigor or in only slightly diminished strength. These were the farmers, after 1918 better organized and more powerful than during the high tide of the progressive revolt; the politically conscious elements among organized labor,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5, 131, 135 ff. For a recent excellent survey, previously cited, see Henry F. May, "Shifting Perspectives on the 1920's." Schlesinger's previously cited *Age of Roosevelt* sheds much new light on the economic thought of the 1920's.

particularly the railroad brotherhoods, who wielded a power all out of proportion to their numbers; the Democratic organizations in the large cities, usually vitally concerned with the welfare of the so-called lower classes; a remnant of independent radicals, social workers, and social gospel writers and preachers; and finally, an emerging new vocal element, the champions of public power and regional developments.

Although they never united effectively enough to capture a major party and the national government before 1932, these progressive elements controlled Congress from 1921 to about 1927 and continued to exercise a near control during the period of their greatest weakness in the legislative branch, from 1927 to about 1930.

Indeed, the single most powerful and consistently successful group in Congress during the entire decade from 1919 to 1929 were the spokesmen of the farmers. Spurred by an unrest in the country areas more intense than at any time since the 1890's,¹² in 1920 and 1921 southern Democrats and mid-western and western insurgents, nominally Republican, joined forces in an alliance called the Farm Bloc. By maintaining a common front from 1921 to 1924 they succeeded in enacting the most advanced agricultural legislation to that date, legislation that completed the program begun under Wilsonian auspices. It included measures for high tariffs on agricultural products, thoroughgoing federal regulation of stockyards, packing houses, and grain exchanges, the exemption of agricultural cooperatives from the application of the antitrust laws, stimulation of the export of agricultural commodities, and the establishment of an entirely new federal system of intermediate rural credit.

When prosperity failed to return to the countryside, rural leaders in Congress espoused a new and bolder plan for relief — the proposal made by George N. Peck and Hugh S. Johnson in 1922 to use the federal power to obtain "fair exchange" or "parity" prices for farm products. Embodied in the McNary-Haugen bill in 1924, this measure was approved by Congress in 1927 and 1928, only to encounter vetoes by President Calvin Coolidge.

In spite of its momentary failure, the McNary-Haugen bill had a momentous significance for the American progressive movement. Its wholesale espousal by the great mass of farm leaders and spokesmen meant that the politically most powerful class in the country had come full scale to the conviction that the taxing power should be used directly and specifically for the purpose of underwriting (some persons called it subsidizing) agricul-

¹² It derived from the fact that farm prices plummeted in 1920 and 1921, and remained so low that farmers, generally speaking, operated at a net capital loss throughout the balance of the decade.

ture. It was a milestone in the development of a comprehensive political doctrine that it was government's duty to protect the economic security of all classes and particularly depressed ones. McNary-Haugenism can be seen in its proper perspective if it is remembered that it would have been considered almost absurd in the Wilson period, that it was regarded as radical by non-farm elements in the 1920's, and that it, or at any rate its fundamental objective, was incorporated almost as a matter of course into basic federal policy in the 1930's.

A second significant manifestation of the survival of progressivism in the 1920's came during the long controversy over public ownership or regulation of the burgeoning electric power industry. In this, as in most of the conflicts that eventually culminated on Capitol Hill, the agrarian element constituted the core of progressive strength. At the same time a sizable and well-organized independent movement developed that emanated from urban centers and was vigorous on the municipal and state levels. Throughout the decade this relatively new progressive group fought with mounting success to expose the propaganda of the private utilities, to strengthen state and federal regulatory agencies, and to win municipal ownership for distributive facilities. Like the advocates of railroad regulation in an earlier period, these proponents of regulation or ownership of a great new natural monopoly failed almost as much as they had succeeded in the 1920's. But their activities and exposures (the Federal Trade Commission's devastating investigation of the electric power industry in the late 1920's and early 1930's was the prime example) laid secure foundations for movements that in the 1930's would reach various culminations.

Even more significant for the future of American progressivism was the emergence in the 1920's of a new objective, that of committing the federal government to plans for large hydroelectric projects in the Tennessee Valley, the Columbia River watershed, the Southwest, and the St. Lawrence Valley for the purpose, some progressives said, of establishing "yardsticks" for rates, or for the further purpose, as other progressives declared, of beginning a movement for the eventual nationalization of the entire electric power industry. The development of this movement in its emerging stages affords a good case study in the natural history of American progressivism. It began when Harding and Coolidge administrations attempted to dispose of the government's hydroelectric and nitrate facilities at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, to private interests. In the first stage of the controversy, the progressive objective was merely federal operation of these facilities for the production of cheap fertilizer — a reflection of its exclusive special-interest orientation. Then, as new groups joined the fight to save Muscle Shoals, the

objective of public production of cheap electric power came to the fore. Finally, by the end of the 1920's, the objective of a multipurpose regional development in the Tennessee Valley and in other areas as well had taken firm shape.

In addition, by 1928 the agrarians in Congress led by Senator George W. Norris had found enough allies in the two houses and enough support in the country at large to adopt a bill for limited federal development of the Tennessee Valley. Thwarted by President Coolidge's pocket veto, the progressives tried again in 1931, only to meet a second rebuff at the hands of President Herbert Hoover.

All this might be regarded as another milestone in the maturing of American progressivism. It signified a deviation from the older traditions of mere regulation, as President Hoover had said in his veto of the second Muscle Shoals bill, and the triumph of new concepts of direct federal leadership in large-scale development of resources. If progressives had not won their goal by the end of the 1920's, they had at least succeeded in writing what would become perhaps the most important plank in their program for the future.

The maturing of an advanced farm program and the formulation of plans for public power and regional developments may be termed the two most significant progressive achievements on the national level in the 1920's. Others merit only brief consideration. One was the final winning of the old progressive goal of immigration restriction through limited and selective admission. The fact that this movement was motivated in part by racism, nativism, and anti-Semitism (with which, incidentally, a great many if not a majority of progressives were imbued in the 1920's) should not blind us to the fact that it was also progressive. It sought to substitute a so-called scientific and a planned policy of *laissez faire*. Its purpose was admittedly to disturb the free operation of the international labor market. Organized labor and social workers had long supported it against the opposition of large employers. And there was prohibition, the most ambitious and revealing progressive experiment of the twentieth century. Even the condemned anti-evolution crusade of Bryan and the fundamentalists and the surging drives for conformity of thought and action in other fields should be mentioned. All these movements stemmed from the conviction that organized public power could and should be used purposefully to achieve fundamental social and so-called moral change. The fact that they were potentially or actively repressive does not mean that they were not progressive. On the contrary, they superbly illustrated the repressive tendencies that inhered in progressivism precisely because it was grounded so much upon majoritarian principles.

Three other developments on the national level that have often been cited as evidences of the failure of progressivism in the 1920's appear in a somewhat different light at second glance. The first was the reversal of the tariff-for-revenue-only tendencies of the Underwood Act with the enactment of the Emergency Tariff Act of 1921 and the Fordney-McCumber Act of 1922. Actually, the adoption of these measures signified, on the whole, not a repudiation but a revival of progressive principles in the realm of federal fiscal policy. A revenue tariff had never been an authentic progressive objective. Indeed, at least by 1913, many progressives, except for some southern agrarians, had concluded that it was retrogressive and had agreed that the tariff laws should be used deliberately to achieve certain national objectives — for example, the crippling of noncompetitive big business by the free admission of articles manufactured by so-called trusts, or benefits to farmers by the free entry of farm implements. Wilson himself had been at least partially converted to these principles by 1916, as his insistence upon the creation of the Federal Tariff Commission and his promise of protection to the domestic chemical industry revealed. As for the tariff legislation of the early 1920's, its only important changes were increased protection for aluminum, chemical products, and agricultural commodities. It left the Underwood rates on the great mass of raw materials and manufactured goods largely undisturbed. It may have been economically shortsighted and a bad example for the rest of the world, but for the most part it was progressive in principle and was the handiwork of the progressive coalition in Congress.

Another development that has often been misunderstood in its relation to the progressive movement was the policies of consistent support that the Harding and Coolidge administrations adopted for business enterprise, particularly the policy of the Federal Trade Commission in encouraging the formation of trade associations and the diminution of certain traditional competitive practices. The significance of all this can easily be overrated. Such policies as these two administrations executed had substantial justification in progressive theory and in precedents clearly established by the Wilson administration.

A third challenge to usual interpretations concerns implications to be drawn from the election of Harding and Coolidge in 1920 and 1924. These elections seem to indicate the triumph of reaction among the mass of American voters. Yet one could argue that both Harding and Coolidge were political accidents, the beneficiaries of grave defects in the American political and constitutional systems. The rank and file of Republican voters demonstrated during the preconvention campaign that they wanted vigorous leadership and a moderately progressive candidate in 1920. They got Harding instead, not because they wanted him, but because unusual circumstances

permitted a small clique to thwart the will of the majority.¹³ They took Coolidge as their candidate in 1924 simply because Harding died in the middle of his term and there seemed to be no alternative to nominating the man who had succeeded him in the White House. Further, an analysis of the election returns in 1920 and 1924 will show that the really decisive factor in the victories of Harding and Coolidge was the fragmentation of the progressive movement and the fact that an opposition strong enough to rally and unite the progressive majority simply did not exist.

There remains, finally, a vast area of progressive activity about which we yet know very little. One could mention the continuation of old reform movements and the development of new ones in the cities and states during the years following the Armistice: For example, the steady spread of the city manager form of government, the beginning of zoning and planning movements, and the efforts of the great cities to keep abreast of the transportation revolution then in full swing. Throughout the country the educational and welfare activities of the cities and states steadily increased. Factory legislation matured, while social insurance had its experimental beginnings. Whether such reform impulses were generally weak or strong, one cannot say; but what we do know about developments in cities like Cincinnati and states like New York, Wisconsin, and Louisiana¹⁴ justifies a challenge to the assumption that municipal and state reform energies were dead after 1918 and, incidentally, a plea to young scholars to plow this unworked field of recent American history.

Let us, then, suggest a tentative synthesis as an explanation of what happened to the progressive movement after 1918:

First, the national progressive movement, which had found its most effective embodiment in the coalition of forces that reelected Woodrow Wilson in 1916, was shattered by certain policies that the administration pursued from 1917 to 1920, and by some developments over which the administration had no or only slight control. The collapse that occurred in 1920 was not inevitable and cannot be explained by merely saying that "the war killed the progressive movement."

Second, large and aggressive components of a potential new progressive coalition remained after 1920. These elements never succeeded in uniting effectively before the end of the decade, not because they did not exist, but because they were divided by conflicts among themselves. National leadership, which in any event did not emerge in the 1920's, perhaps could not

¹³ Much that is new on the Republican pre-convention campaign and convention of 1920 may be found in William T. Hutchinson, *Lowden of Illinois: The Life of Frank O. Lowden* (2 vols., Chicago, 1957).

¹⁴ See, e.g., Allan P. Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana: State Politics, 1920-1952* (Baltimore, Md., 1956).

have succeeded in subduing these tensions and in creating a new common front.

Third, as a result of the foregoing, progressivism as an organized national force suffered a serious decline in the 1920's. This decline was heightened by the defection of large elements among the urban middle classes and the intellectuals, a desertion induced by technological, economic, and demographic changes, and by the outcropping of certain repressive tendencies in progressivism after 1917.

Fourth, in spite of reversals and failures, important components of the national progressive movement survived in considerable vigor and succeeded to a varying degree, not merely in keeping the movement alive, but even in broadening its horizons. This was true particularly of the farm groups and of the coalition concerned with public regulation or ownership of electric power resources. These two groups laid the groundwork in the 1920's for significant new programs in the 1930's and beyond.

Fifth, various progressive coalitions controlled Congress for the greater part of the 1920's and were always a serious threat to the conservative administrations that controlled the executive branch. Because this was true, most of the legislation adopted by Congress during this period, including many measures that historians have inaccurately called reactionary, was progressive in character.

Sixth, the progressive movement in the cities and states was far from dead in the 1920's, although we do not have sufficient evidence to justify any generalizations about the degree of its vigor.

If this tentative and imperfect synthesis has any value, perhaps it is high time that we discard the sweeping generalizations, false hypotheses, and clichés that we have so often used in explaining and characterizing political developments from 1918 to 1929. Perhaps we should try to see these developments for what they were — the normal and ordinary political behavior of groups and classes caught up in a swirl of social and economic change. When we do this we will no longer ask whether the progressive movement was defunct in the 1920's. We will ask only what happened to it and why.

“ISOLATIONISM” OR “NEUTRALISM”

Whether or not one wholly agrees with William A. Williams, Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, that the notion of American isolationism in the 'twenties “is no more than a legend,” the assumption underlying his argument — that the meaning and uses of the word “isolationism” itself need redefinition — is hard to dispute. Used too easily and too imprecisely by contemporary commentators and scholars alike, “isolationism” frequently obscured as much as it revealed. In a number of important ways the United States has never been or desired to be isolationist. From its founding this nation has eagerly sought commercial relations with all parts of the world. As Williams and Paul Boller show (see p. 483, below), the desire of American businessmen to maintain and expand their trade with foreign nations has often taken precedence over political and ideological considerations. The cultural and intellectual spheres were similarly marked by international intercourse. Foreign writers, artists, and educators had an important impact upon American art, thought, and education. They traveled to this country to lecture and teach and Americans returned their visits in increasing numbers.

Americans, then, have at no point attempted to erect a Chinese Wall against foreign intercourse or foreign ideas. What has been called American isolationism might be more accurately defined in the terminology of our own times as a form of political neutralism. Those who most ardently espoused such a course of action did so for many of the same nationalistic reasons that motivate the neutralist nations of our own time. And not insignificantly, the advocates of political withdrawal in Europe were often the most vociferous exponents of active intervention in Asia and Latin America, which casts serious doubt upon the validity of the isolationist label. [This problem is discussed in the two-part article by B. Fernsterwald, Jr., “The Anatomy of American ‘Isolationism’ and Expansion,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, II (June 1958) 111-139; (Dec. 1958) 280-307.]

Even this limited political non-involvement with Europe has never been completely carried out as a national policy. Nor can all of those who espoused such a policy be labeled isolationists. That William Jennings Bryan, who resigned from the State Department in 1915 in protest against possible American entry into World War I, could energetically champion the League of Nations, that such leading “irreconcilables” as William Borah and Hiram Johnson could advocate American

recognition of the Soviet Union, that the leading exponent of neutrality legislation in the 'thirties and a member of the America First Committee, Senator Gerald Nye, could vote against the extension of the Neutrality Acts to the Spanish Civil War, all suggest that the motives and aims of those commonly labeled isolationists were more complex and less rigid than commonly supposed. Many of the leading opponents of American involvement in World War I were strongly committed to varying degrees of international cooperation and most of the businessmen who opposed American entry into World War II did so because they feared business dislocation and the imposition of "war socialism" rather than because of antipathy toward the rest of the world. [On the latter point see R. Stromberg, "American Business and the Approach of War, 1935-1941," *Journal of Economic History*, XIII (Winter 1953) 58-68. For the somewhat different attitudes of business before World War I see H. C. Syrett, "The Business Community and American Neutrality, 1914-1917," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXII (Sept. 1945) 215-230.] Many more investigations such as these are needed before we can explain with greater precision the attitudes of Americans at different periods of their history toward the world in which they lived. If Professor Williams' argument is a bit oversimplified, if his article too easily overlooks the actions and the ethos in the 'twenties that can in fact be described as isolationist, it nevertheless points out some of the many areas in which Americans of that period were internationalist and helps to reopen a problem that badly needs more thoughtful analysis.

The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's

WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS

The widely accepted assumption that the United States was isolationist from 1920 through 1932 is no more than a legend. Sir Francis Bacon might have classed this myth of isolation as one of his Idols of the Market-Place. An "ill and unfit choice of words," he cautioned, "leads men away into innumerable and inane controversies and fancies."¹ And certainly the application of the terms *isolation* and *isolationism* to a period and a policy that were characterized by vigorous involvement in the affairs of the world with consciousness of purpose qualifies as an "ill and unfit choice of words."

Reprinted from *Science and Society* XVIII (Winter 1954) 1-20, by permission of *Science and Society*. This paper was read before the December, 1953, meeting of the Pacific Historical Association, held at Davis College, California.

¹ F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Headlam's translation as received by C. P. Curtis and F. Greenslet, *The Practical Cogitator* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945), pp. 14-16.

Thus the purpose of this essay: on the basis of an investigation of the record to suggest that, far from isolation, the foreign relations of the United States from 1920 through 1932 were marked by express and extended involvement with — and intervention in the affairs of — other nations of the world.

It is both more accurate and more helpful to consider the twenties as contiguous with the present instead of viewing those years as a quixotic interlude of low-down jazz and lower-grade gin, fluttering flappers and Faulkner's fiction, and bootlegging millionaires and millionaire bootleggers. For in foreign policy there is far less of a sharp break between 1923 and 1953 than generally is acknowledged. A closer examination of the so-called isolationists of the twenties reveals that many of them were in fact busily engaged in extending American power. Those individuals and groups have not dramatically changed their outlook on foreign affairs. Their policies and objectives may differ with those of others (including professors), but they have never sought to isolate the United States.

This interpretation runs counter to the folklore of American foreign relations. Harvard places isolationism "in the saddle." Columbia sees "Americans retiring within their own shell." Yale judges that policy "degenerated" into isolation — among other things.² Others, less picturesque but equally positive, refer to a "marked increase of isolationist sentiment" and to "those years of isolationism." Another group diagnoses the populace as having "ingrained isolationism," analyzes it as "sullen and selfish" in consequence, and characterizes it as doing "its best to forget international subjects." Related verdicts describe the Republican party as "predominantly isolationist" and as an organization that "fostered a policy of deliberate isolation."³

² A. M. Schlesinger, *Paths to the Present* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1949), 69, 201; L. M. Hacker, "American International Relations," in *The United States and Its Place in World Affairs, 1918-1943*, ed. by A. Nevins and L. M. Hacker, (Boston, D. C. Heath and Co., 1943), p. 166; S. F. Bemis, "The Shifting Strategy of American Defense and Diplomacy," in *Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee*, ed. by D. E. Lee and G. E. McReynolds (Worcester, Clark University, 1949), p. 9.

³ In sequence, these quotations come from S. Adler, "The War-Guilt Question and American Disillusionment, 1919-1928," *The Journal of Modern History*, XXIII, No. 1 (March, 1951), p. 27; A. K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny. A study of Nationalist Expansion in American History* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 473; L. M. Hacker and H. S. Zahler, *The United States in the 20th Century* (New York, Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1952), pp. 278, 302; W. Wilson, quoted in Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, p. 473; F. D. Roosevelt, *Foreign Affairs*, VI, No. 4 (July, 1928), p. 577; W. Johnson, *The Battle Against Isolation* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1944), p. 132. For similar expressions see S. F. Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (3rd ed., New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1950), p. 705; J. D. Hicks, *The American Nation* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), p. 565; D. Perkins, *The Evolution of American Foreign Policy* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 110; and A. Nevins, *America in World Affairs* (London, Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 80.

Most pointed of these specifications is a terse two-word summary of the diplomacy of the period: "Isolation Perfected."⁴ Popularizers have transcribed this theme into a burlesque. Their articles and books convey the impression that the Secretaries of State were in semi-retirement and that the citizenry wished to do away with the Department itself.⁵ Columnists and commentators have made the concept an eerie example of George Orwell's double-think. They label as isolationists the most vigorous interventionists.

The case would seem to be closed and judgment given if it were not for the ambivalence of some observers and the brief dissents filed by a few others. The scholar who used the phrase "those years of isolationism," for example, remarks elsewhere in the same book that "expansionism . . . really was long a major expression of isolationism." Another writes of the "return to an earlier policy of isolation," and on the next page notes a "shift in policy during the twenties amounting almost to a 'diplomatic revolution'." A recent biographer states that Henry Cabot Lodge "did not propose . . . an isolationist attitude," but then proceeds to characterize the Monroe Doctrine — upon which Lodge stood in his fight against the League of Nations treaty — as a philosophy of "isolation." And in the last volume of his trilogy, the late Professor Frederick L. Paxton summed up a long review of the many diplomatic activities of the years 1919-1923 with the remark that this was a foreign policy of "avoidance rather than of action."⁶

But a few scholars, toying with the Idol of the Market-Place, have made bold to rock the image. Yet Professor Richard Van Alstyne was doing more than playing the iconoclast when he observed that the "militant manifest

⁴ D. F. Fleming, *The United States and World Organization, 1920-1933* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1938), title of Chapter VI.

⁵ This literature is far too vast to cite, but even a perusal of *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* will indicate the great volume of such material. It is vital to note, however, that the so-called disillusionment writers did not make this mistake — whatever their other errors. They criticized the policies of the time, but documented, in such journals as *The Nation*, the active character of the diplomacy.

⁶ Quotations, in order, from Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, pp. 473, 454; H. U. Faulkner, *American Political and Social History* (6th ed., New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), pp. 700, 701; J. A. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge. A Biography* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 348, 364-65; F. L. Paxton, *American Democracy and the World War. Postwar Years. Normalcy, 1918-1923* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1948), p. 367. For other examples of this ambiguity see D. Perkins, *The American Approach to Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 26; T. A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (4th ed., New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), p. 682 — where he says that the Harding Administration "retreated into what ex-President Wilson described as 'sullen and selfish isolation'"; H. J. Carman and H. C. Syrett, *A History of the American People* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), pp. 264-65, and title of Chapter XII; S. E. Morrison and H. S. Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* (4th ed., New York, Oxford University Press, 1950), Volume II, p. 497; and H. B. Parkes, *The United States of America* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).

destiny men were the isolationists of the nineteenth century." For with this insight we can translate those who maintain that Lodge "led the movement to perpetuate the traditional policy of isolation." Perhaps William G. Carleton was even more forthright. In 1946 he pointed out that the fight over the League treaty was not between isolationists and internationalists, and added that many of the mislabeled isolationists were actually "nationalists and imperialists." Equally discerning was Charles Beard's comment in 1933 that the twenties were marked by a "return to the more aggressive ways . . . [used] to protect and advance the claims of American business enterprise." All these interpretations were based on facts that prompted another scholar to change his earlier conclusion and declare in 1953 that "the thought was all of keeping American freedom of action."⁷

These are perceptive comments. Additional help has recently been supplied by two other students of the period. One of these is Robert E. Osgood, who approached the problem in terms of *Ideals and Self-Interest in American Foreign Relations*.⁸ Though primarily concerned with the argument that Americans should cease being naive, Osgood suggests that certain

⁷ R. W. Van Alstyne, "The Significance of the Mississippi Valley in American Diplomatic History, 1686-1890," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXVI, No. 2 (September, 1949), p. 238; L. L. Leonard, *Elements of American Foreign Policy* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1953), p. 220; among the many others who characterize Lodge in this manner is S. Adler in his recent article on isolation, "Isolationism Since 1914," *The American Scholar*, XXI, No. 3 (Summer, 1952), p. 340; W. G. Carleton, "Isolationism and the Middle West," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIII, No. 3 (December, 1946), pp. 381-82; C. A. and M. R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New Edition. Two Volumes in One. Revised and Enlarged. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1933), pp. 681-83; and compare D. Perkins, *The American Approach to Foreign Policy*, 26, with D. Perkins, "The Department of State and Public Opinion," Chapter IX in *The Diplomats 1919-1939*, ed. by G. A. Graig and F. Gilbert (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 308. Interestingly enough, both Carleton and Van Alstyne addressed their remarks to meetings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, and their articles later appeared as lead articles in the *Review*. On the same program with Van Alstyne, furthermore, was Professor Richard Leopold, whose comments were of a similar nature and whose paper was also printed. This professional audience seems to have ignored their keen suggestions. Professor Weinberg's article, "The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation," *The American Political Science Review*, XXXIV (1940), pp. 539-47, offers certain concepts that would go far to resolve the contradictions in his earlier *Manifest Destiny*, but he did not apply the ideas to any later period. H. Feis writes of America's active foreign economic policy in *The Diplomacy of the Dollar, First Era, 1919-1932* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), but fails to note that these facts contradict the idea of isolation. The same approach is taken by G. Soule, *Prosperity Decade. From War to Depression: 1917-1929* (New York, Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1947), pp. 252-74. Far more stimulating than either Feis or Soule is S. Kuznets, "Foreign Economic Relations of the United States and Their Impact Upon the Domestic Economy," Chapter 11 in his *Economic Change* (New York, W. W. Norton and Co., 1953), pp. 296-333. See also the neglected work of A. D. Gayer and C. T. Schmidt, *American Economic Foreign Policy. Postwar History, Analysis, and Interpretation* (New York, no publisher given, 1939), especially pp. 11-17.

⁸ R. E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations. The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953).

stereotypes are misleading. One might differ with his analysis of the struggle over the Treaty of Versailles, but not with his insistence that there were fundamental differences between Senators Lodge and William F. Borah — as well as between those two and President Woodrow Wilson. Osgood likewise raises questions about the reputed withdrawal of the American public. Over a thousand organizations for the study of international relations existed in 1926, to say nothing of the groups that sought constantly to make or modify foreign policy.

Osgood gives little attention to this latter aspect of foreign relations, a surprising omission on the part of a realist.⁹ But the underlying assumption of his inquiry cannot be challenged. The foreign policy issue of the twenties was never isolationism. The controversy and competition were waged between those who entertained different concepts of the national interest and disagreed over the means to be employed to secure that objective. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes was merely more eloquent, not less explicit. "Foreign policies," he explained in 1923, "are not built upon abstractions. They are the result of practical conceptions of national interest arising from some immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective."¹⁰

Historian George L. Grassmuck used this old-fashioned premise of the politician as a tool with which to probe the *Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy*. Disciplining himself more rigorously in the search for primary facts than did Osgood, Grassmuck's findings prompted him to conclude that "the 'sheep and goats' technique" of historical research is eminently unproductive. From 1921 to 1933, for example, the Republicans in both houses of Congress were "more favorable to both Army and Navy measures than . . . Democrats." Eighty-five percent of the same Republicans supported international economic measures and agreements. As for the Middle West, that much condemned section did not reveal any "extraordinary indication of a . . . tendency to withdraw." Nor was there "an intense 'isolationism' on the part of [its] legislators with regard to membership in a world organization."¹¹ And what opposition there was seems to

⁹ This is strange for a realist trained in the school of Professor Hans J. Morgenthau's *Realpolitik*. For the realists emphasize the fact that the relationship between power and ideals is reciprocal. Not only do ideas fail to have consequences without power, but the sources and the nature of the power have some correlation with the character of the ideals. Thus it would seem doubly unrealistic to slight the sources of power and at the same time discuss the ideas without reference to the private as well as the public record of the groups and individuals in question.

¹⁰ C. E. Hughes, "The Centenary of the Monroe Doctrine," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Supplement to Volume CXI (January, 1923), p. 7.

¹¹ G. L. Grassmuck, *Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1951), pp. 32, 93, 162, 49.

have been as much the consequence of dust bowls and depression as the product of disillusioned scholars in ivory towers.

These investigations and correlations have two implications. First, the United States was neither isolated nor did it pursue a policy of isolationism from 1920 to 1933. Second, if the policy of that era, so generally accepted as the product of traditional isolationist sentiment, proves non-isolationist, then the validity and usefulness of the concept when applied to earlier or later periods may seriously be challenged.

Indeed, it would seem more probable that the central theme of American foreign relations has been the expansion of the United States. Alexander Hamilton made astute use of the phrase "no entangling alliances" during the negotiation of Jay's Treaty in 1794, but his object was a *de facto* affiliation with the British Fleet — not isolation.¹² Nor was Thomas Jefferson seeking to withdraw when he made of Monticello a counselling center for those seeking to emulate the success of the American Revolution. A century later Senator Lodge sought to revise the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations with reservations that seemed no more than a restatement of Hamilton's remarks. Yet the maneuvers of Lodge were no more isolationist in character and purpose than Hamilton's earlier action. And while surely no latter-day Jefferson, Senator Borah was anything but an isolationist in his concept of the power of economics and ideas. Borah not only favored the recognition of the Soviet Union in order to influence the development of the Bolshevik Revolution and as a check against Japanese expansion in Asia, but also argued that American economic policies were intimately connected with foreign political crises. All those men were concerned with the extension of one or more aspects of American influence, power, and authority.

Approached in this manner, the record of American foreign policy in the twenties verifies the judgments of two remarkably dissimilar students: historian Richard W. Leopold and Senator Lodge. The professor warns that the era was "more complex than most glib generalizations . . . would suggest"; and the scholastic politician concludes that, excepting war, there "never [was] a period when the United States [was] more active and its influence more felt internationally than between 1921 and 1924."¹³ The admonition about perplexity was offered as helpful advice, not as an invita-

¹² Hamilton to the British Minister, as quoted by S. F. Bemis, *Jay's Treaty. A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New York, Macmillan and Co., 1924), p. 246.

¹³ R. W. Leopold, "The Mississippi Valley and American Foreign Policy, 1890-1941: an Assessment and an Appeal," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXVII, No. 4 (March, 1951), p. 635; H. C. Lodge, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921-1924," *Foreign Affairs*, II, No. 4 (June, 1924), p. 526.

tion to anti-intellectualism. For, as the remarks of the Senator implied, recognition that a problem is involved does not mean that it cannot be resolved.

Paradox and complexity can often be clarified by rearranging the data around a new focal point that is common to all aspects of the apparent contradiction. The confusion of certainty and ambiguity that characterizes most accounts of American foreign policy in the twenties stems from the fact that they are centered on the issue of membership in the League of Nations. Those Americans who wanted to join are called internationalists. Opponents of that move became isolationist. But the subsequent action of most of those who fought participation in the League belies this simple classification. And the later policies of many who favored adherence to the League casts serious doubts upon the assumption that they were willing to negotiate or arbitrate questions that they defined as involving the national interest. More pertinent is an examination of why certain groups and individuals favored or disapproved of the League, coupled with a review of the programs they supported after that question was decided.

Yet such a re-study of the League fight is in itself insufficient. Equally important is a close analysis of the American reaction to the Bolshevik Revolution. Both the League Covenant and the Treaty of Versailles were written on a table shaken by that upheaval. The argument over the ratification of the combined documents was waged in a context determined as much by Nikolai Lenin's *Appeal to the Toiling, Oppressed, and Exhausted Peoples of Europe* and the Soviet Declaration to the Chinese People as by George Washington's Farewell Address.¹⁴

Considered within the setting of the Bolshevik Revolution, the basic question was far greater than whether or not to enter the League. At issue was what response was to be made to the domestic and international division of labor that had accompanied the Industrial Revolution. Challenges from organized urban labor, dissatisfied farmers, frightened men of property, searching intellectual critics, and colonial peoples rudely interrupted almost every meeting of the Big Four in Paris and were echoed in many Senate debates over the treaty. And those who determined American policy

¹⁴ None of the authors cited above makes this association of events central to his discussion of the League issue. Few of them even connect the two. The integration has, of course, been made: most notably by E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947); M. Dobb, *Political Economy and Capitalism. Some Essays in Economic Tradition* (New York, International Publishers, 1945), Chapter VII, and *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (New York, International Publishers, 1947), Chapter VIII; H. J. Laski, *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (New York, 1947); Sir L. Namier, *Conflicts. Studies in Contemporary History* (London, The Macmillan Co., 1942), Chapter I; and, of especial significance, H. Hoover, *American Individualism* (Garden City, Doubleday, Page and Co., 1923).

through the decade of the twenties were consciously concerned with the same problem.

An inquiry into this controversy over the broad question of how to end the war reveals certain divisions within American society. These groupings were composed of individuals and organizations whose position on the League of Nations was coincident with and part of their response to the Bolsheviks; or, in a wider sense, with their answer to that general unrest, described by Woodrow Wilson as a "feeling of revolt against the large vested interests which influenced the world both in the economic and the political sphere."¹⁵ Once this breakdown has been made it is then possible to follow the ideas and actions of these various associations of influence and power through the years 1920 to 1933.

At the core of the American reaction to the League and the Bolshevik Revolution was the quandary between fidelity to ideals and the urge to power. Jefferson faced a less acute version of the same predicament in terms of whether to force citizenship on settlers west of the Mississippi who were reluctant to be absorbed in the Louisiana Purchase. A century later the anti-imperialists posed the same issue in the more sharply defined circumstances of the Spanish-American War. The League and the Bolsheviks raised the question in its most dramatic context and in unavoidable terms.

There were four broad responses to this reopening of the age-old dilemma. At one pole stood the pure idealists and pacifists, led by William Jennings Bryan. A tiny minority in themselves, they were joined, in terms of general consequences if not in action, by those Americans who were preoccupied with their own solutions to the problem. Many American business men, for example, were concerned primarily with the expansion of trade and were apathetic toward or impatient with the hullabaloo over the League.¹⁶ Diametrically opposed to the idealists were the vigorous expansionists. All these exponents of the main chance did not insist upon an overt crusade to run the world, but they were united on Senator Lodge's proposition that the United States should dominate world politics. Association with other nations they accepted, but not equality of membership or mutuality of decision.

Caught in the middle were those Americans who declined to support

¹⁵ W. Wilson, remarks to the Council of Ten, January 16, 1919, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference* (13 vols., Washington, D. C.), III, p. 583.

¹⁶ See the excellent essay by J. H. Foote, "American Industrialists and Foreign Policy, 1919-1922. A Study in Attitudes," Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1947; for a typical expression see the remarks of Senator Walter E. Edge — "we wasted, practically wasted, two years of the opportunity presented to us at that time, unequaled, as I say, in the history of the world" — in National Foreign Trade Council, *Official Report of the Eighth National Foreign Trade Convention, 1921* (New York, 1921), p. 553.

either extreme. A large number of these people clustered around Woodrow Wilson, and can be called the Wilsonites. Though aware of the dangers and temptations involved, Wilson declared his intention to extend American power for the purpose of strengthening the ideals. However noble that effort, it failed for two reasons. Wilson delegated power and initiative to men and organizations that did not share his objectives, and on his own part the president ultimately "cast in his lot" with the defenders of the status quo.¹⁷

Led by the Sons of the Wild Jackass, the remaining group usually followed Senator Borah in foreign relations. These men had few illusions about the importance of power in human affairs or concerning the authority of the United States in international politics. Prior to the world war they supported — either positively or passively — such vigorous expansionists as Theodore Roosevelt, who led their Progressive Party. But the war and the Bolshevik Revolution jarred some of these Progressives into a closer examination of their assumptions. These reflections and new conclusions widened the breach with those of their old comrades who had moved toward a conservative position on domestic issues. Some of those earlier allies, like Senator Albert J. Beveridge, continued to agitate for an American century. Others, such as Bainbridge Colby, sided with Wilson in 1916 and went along with the president on foreign policy.

But a handful had become firm anti-expansionists by 1919.¹⁸ No attempt was made by these men to deny the power of the United States. Nor did they think that the nation could become self-sufficient and impregnable in its strength. Borah, for example, insisted that America must stand with Russia if Japan and Germany were to be checked. And Johnson constantly pointed out that the question was not whether to withdraw, but at what time and under what circumstances to use the country's influence. What these men did maintain was that any effort to run the world by establish-

¹⁷ W. Wilson, remarks to the Big Five, February 14, 1919, *Foreign Relations. Russia, 1919* (Washington, D. C., 1937), p. 59.

¹⁸ C. Vevier reviewed these early expansionist sympathies of the Progressives in "The Progressives and Dollar Diplomacy," Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1949. W. E. Leuchtenburg later published a summary of his own study of the same question as "Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1916," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX, No. 3 (December, 1952), pp. 483-504. It would seem, however, that Leuchtenburg missed the split within the Progressives over Wilson's foreign policy. For in note 38, page 493, he considers it "remarkable" that the Progressives fought Wilson in view of the degree to which the president "was involved with American imperialist aspirations." This writer's information on the division comes from the manuscript papers of Calvin Coolidge, William E. Borah, William Judson, Samuel N. Harper, Theodore Roosevelt, Alexander Gumberg, Raymond Robins, and Woodrow Wilson; from the materials in the National Archives; and the *Congressional Record*.

ing an American system comparable to the British Empire was both futile and un-American.

In this they agreed with Henry Adams, who debated the same issue with his brother Brooks Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, and Henry Cabot Lodge in the years after 1898. "I incline now to anti-imperialism, and very strongly to anti-militarism," Henry warned. "If we try to rule politically, we take the chances against us." By the end of the first world war another generation of expansionists tended to agree with Henry Adams about ruling politically, but planned to build and maintain a similar pattern of control through the use of America's economic might. Replying to these later expansionists, Borah and other anti-expansionists of the nineteen-twenties argued that if Washington's influence was to be effective it would have to be used to support the movements of reform and colonial nationalism rather than deployed in an effort to dam up and dominate those forces.

For these reasons they opposed Wilson's reorganization of the international banking consortium, fearing that the financiers would either influence strongly or veto — as they did — American foreign policies. With Senator Albert B. Cummins of Iowa they voted against the Wilson-approved Webb-Pomerene Act, which repealed the anti-trust laws for export associations. In the same vein they tried to prevent passage of the Edge Act, an amendment to the Federal Reserve Act that authorized foreign banking corporations.¹⁹ Led by Borah, they bitterly attacked the Versailles Treaty because, in their view, it committed the United States to oppose colonial movements for self-government and to support an unjust and indefensible status quo. From the same perspective they criticized and fought to end intervention in Russia and the suppression of civil liberties at home.²⁰

Contrary to the standard criticism of their actions, however, these anti-expansionists were not just negative die-hards. Senator Cummins maintained from the first that American loans to the allies should be considered

¹⁹ See, for example, the debates on the Webb-Pomerene Act in *Congressional Record*, Volume 56, Part 1, pp. 69–71; and the votes on the same legislation, pp. 168, 186.

²⁰ Especially pertinent are the remarks of Borah, *Congressional Record*, V54:1:636; V57:1:190; V58:3:3143–44; and his letter to F. Lynch, August 1, 1919, *Papers of William E. Borah*, Library to Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C. Also important are the comments of Senator Hiram Johnson, *Congressional Record*, V53:1:503, 505. Eric Goldman's penetrating study of the Progressives, *Rendezvous With Destiny. A History of Modern American Reform* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), completely misses this development. On pp. 273–74, Goldman remarks that the "most striking deviation of American progressivism in foreign affairs from its attitudes in domestic affairs was the enthusiasm for international order in the form of the League of Nations." He proceeds, then, to argue that if the progressives had applied the same criticism to the League as they had to its laissez faire counterpart in domestic affairs "they could hardly have emerged with a favorable attitude." But the key point is that the hard core of the Progressives did exactly this and came out in opposition to the League.

gifts. Borah spoke out on the same issue, hammered away against armed intervention in Latin America, played a key role in securing the appointment of Dwight Morrow as Ambassador to Mexico, and sought to align the United States with, instead of against, the Chinese Revolution. On these and other issues the anti-expansionists were not always of one mind, but as in the case of the Washington Conference Treaties the majority of them were far more positive in their actions than has been acknowledged.²¹

Within this framework the key to the defeat of the League treaty was the defection from the Wilsonites of a group who declined to accept the restrictions that Article X of the League Covenant threatened to impose upon the United States. A morally binding guarantee of the "territorial integrity and existing political integrity of all members of the League" was too much for these men. First they tried to modify that limitation. Failing there, they followed Elihu Root and William Howard Taft, both old time expansionists, to a new position behind Senator Lodge. Among those who abandoned Wilson on this issue were Herbert Hoover, Calvin Coolidge, Charles Evans Hughes, and Henry L. Stimson.

Not all these men were at ease with the vigorous expansionists. Stimson, for one, thought the Lodge reservations "harsh and unpleasant," and later adjusted other of his views.²² Hoover and Hughes tried to revive their version of the League after the Republicans returned to power in 1920. But at the time all of them were more uneasy about what one writer has termed Wilson's "moral imperialism."²³ They were not eager to identify themselves with the memories of that blatant imperialism of the years 1895 to 1905, but neither did they like Article X. That proviso caught them from both sides, it illegalized changes initiated by the United States, and obligated America to restore a status quo to some aspects of which they were either indifferent or antagonistic. But least of all were they anxious to run the risk that the Wilsonian rhetoric of freedom and liberty might be taken seriously in an age of revolution. Either by choice or default they supported the idea of a community of interest among the industrialized powers of the world led by an American-British entente as against the colonial areas and the Soviet Union.

This postwar concept of the community of interest was the first genera-

²¹ This paragraph is based on much the same material cited in note 18. But see, as representative, Cummins' remarks on the loans, *Congressional Record*, V5511:757, 762; Borah on economic factors, V64:1:930-31; and the parliamentary maneuvers over the Liberian Loan, V63:1:287-88.

²² Stimson, Diary entry of December 3, 1919, quoted in H. L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 104.

²³ H. F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 141.

tion intellectual off-spring of Herbert Croly's *Promise of American Life* and Herbert Hoover's *American Individualism*. Croly's opportunistic nationalism provided direction for Hoover's "greater mutuality of interest." The latter was to be expressed in an alliance between the government and the "great trade associations and the powerful corporations."²⁴ Pushed by the Croly-Hoover wing of the old Progressive Party, the idea enjoyed great prestige during the twenties. Among its most ardent exponents were Samuel Gompers and Matthew Woll of the labor movement, Owen D. Young of management, and Bernard Baruch of finance.

What emerged was an American corporatism. The avowed goals were order, stability, and social peace. The means to those objectives were labor-management co-operation, arbitration, and the elimination of waste and inefficiency by closing out unrestrained competition. State intervention was to be firm, but moderated through the cultivation and legalization of trade associations which would, in turn, advise the national government and supply leaders for the federal bureaucracy. The ideal was union in place of diversity and conflict.²⁵

²⁴ H. Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1909); H. Hoover, *American Individualism*, p. 43; and Hoover, quoted in Goldman, *Rendezvous With Destiny*, p. 309. Goldman makes this identification between Croly and Hoover, but does not develop it, either as corporatism or in foreign affairs. Other Americans had spoken the language of the community of interest. J. P. Morgan used it to describe his ideal in the economic realm. Brooks Adams warned Theodore Roosevelt that such coordination at the national level was necessary to insure American supremacy in the world. The Adams argument emphasized the need for an intellectual and political elite chosen from the upper classes to supervise the community of interest through control of the national government.

²⁵ American corporatism is a neglected field. This writer is greatly indebted to Professor Paul Farmer, University of Wisconsin, for many long discussions of the question. Farmer brought to these conversations his intimate and extended knowledge of French corporative theory and practice as it developed to and culminated in the Vichy Government. His insights into the American scene were equally penetrating. At a later date M. H. Elbow, *French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948. A Chapter in the History of Ideas* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1953), was helpful in review. Of other published material, the following were most helpful: S. D. Alinsky, *Reveille For Radicals* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946); G. A. Almond, "The Political Attitudes of Wealth," *Journal of Politics*, VII, No. 3 (August, 1945); R. A. Brady, *Business as a System of Power* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1938); R. Bendix, "Bureaucracy and the Problem of Power," *Public Administration Review*, V, No. 3 (Summer, 1945); J. A. C. Grant, "The Guild Returns to America," *Journal of Politics*, IV, Nos. 3 and 4 (August, November, 1942); W. E. Henry, "The Business Executive: the Psychodynamics of a Social Role," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIV, No. 1 (January, 1949); E. J. Howenstine, "Public Works Policy in the Twenties," *Social Research*, XII (December, 1946); F. Hunter, *Community Power Structure. A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1953); R. S. Lynd, "Power Politics and the Post War World," in *The Postwar World. The Merrick Lectures for 1944* (New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945); and M. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. by A. M. Henderson and T. Parsons, ed. by T. Parsons (New York, Oxford University Press, 1947). For a revealing glimpse of the later bi-partisan movement toward corporatism, and the consequences thereof, see *The Welfare State and the National Welfare. A Symposium on Some of the Threatening*

Other than Hoover, the chief spokesmen of this new community of interest as applied to foreign affairs were Secretaries of State Hughes and Stimson. In the late months of 1931 Stimson was to shift his ground, but until that time he supported the principle. All three men agreed that American economic power should be used to build, strengthen, and maintain the co-operation they sought. As a condition for his entry into the cabinet, Hoover demanded — and received — a major voice in “all important economic policies of the administration.”²⁶ With the energetic assistance of Julius Klein, lauded by the National Foreign Trade Council as the “international business go-getter of Uncle Sam,” Hoover changed the Department of Commerce from an agency primarily concerned with interstate commerce to one that concentrated on foreign markets and loans, and control of import sources.²⁷ Hughes and Stimson handled the political aspects of establishing a “community of ideals, interests and purposes.”²⁸

These men were not imperialists in the traditional sense of that much abused term. All agreed with Klein that the object was to eliminate “the old imperialistic trappings of politico-economic exploitation.” They sought instead the “internationalization of business.”²⁹ Through the use of economic power they wanted to establish a common bond, forged of similar assumptions and purposes, with both the industrialized nations and the native business community in the colonial areas of the world. Their deployment of America’s material strength is unquestioned. President Calvin Coolidge reviewed their success, and indicated the political implications thereof, on Memorial Day, 1928. “Our investments and trade relations are such,” he summarized, “that it is almost impossible to conceive of any conflict anywhere on earth which would not affect us injuriously.”³⁰

Internationalization through the avoidance of conflict was the key objective. This did not mean a negative foreign policy. Positive action was the basic theme. The transposition of corporatist principles to the area of foreign relations produced a parallel policy. American leadership and intervention would build a world community regulated by agreement among the industrialized nations. The prevention of revolution and the preservation of

Tendencies of Our Times, ed. by S. Glueck (Cambridge, Addison-Wesley Press, Inc., 1952); and the last chapter in Goldman, *Rendezvous With Destiny*.

²⁶ *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover. The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920–1933* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1952), p. 36.

²⁷ *Official Report of the 18th Foreign Trade Convention, 1931* (New York, 1931), p. 287.

²⁸ C. E. Hughes, remarks concerning a substitute for Article X of the League Covenant, Union League Club Speech, New York, March 26, 1919.

²⁹ J. Klein, *Frontiers of Trade* (New York, The Century Co., 1929), p. 40, 46.

³⁰ C. Coolidge, Address of May 30, 1928, *Congressional Record*, V69:10:10729.

the sanctity of private property were vital objectives. Hughes was very clear when he formulated the idea for Latin America. "We are seeking to establish a *Pax Americana* maintained not by arms but by mutual respect and good will and the tranquillizing processes of reason." There would be, he admitted, "interpositions of a temporary character" — the Secretary did not like the connotations of the word intervention — but only to facilitate the establishment of the United States as the "exemplar of justice."³¹

Extension to the world of this pattern developed in Latin America was more involved. There were five main difficulties, four in the realm of foreign relations and one in domestic affairs. The internal problem was to establish and integrate a concert of decision between the government and private economic groups. Abroad the objectives were more sharply defined: circumscribe the impact of the Soviet Union, forestall and control potential resistance of colonial areas, pamper and cajole Germany and Japan into acceptance of the basic proposition, and secure from Great Britain practical recognition of the fact that Washington had become the center of Anglo-Saxon collaboration. Several examples will serve to illustrate the general outline of this diplomacy, and to indicate the friction between the office holders and the office dwellers.

Wilson's Administration left the incoming Republicans a plurality of tools designed for the purpose of extending American power. The Webb-Pomerene Law, the Edge Act, and the banking consortium were but three of the more obvious and important of these. Certain polishing and sharpening remained to be done, as exemplified by Hoover's generous interpretation of the Webb-Pomerene legislation, but this was a minor problem. Hoover and Hughes added to these implements with such laws as the one designed to give American customs officials diplomatic immunity so that they could do cost accounting surveys of foreign firms. This procedure was part of the plan to provide equal opportunity abroad, under which circumstances Secretary Hughes was confident that "American business men would take care of themselves."³²

It was harder to deal with the British, who persisted in annoying indications that they considered themselves equal partners in the enterprise. Bainbridge Colby, Wilson's last Secretary of State, ran into the same trouble. Unless England came "to our way of thinking," Colby feared that "agree-

³¹ C. E. Hughes, "Centenary of the Monroe Doctrine," *Annals*, p. 17; and Hughes, remarks to the Havana Conference, 1928.

³² The story of the fight over diplomatic immunity for consular officers can be followed in *Foreign Relations*, 1925, pp. 211-54; the quote from Hughes is by J. Butler Wright, in *Official Report of the 12th National Foreign Trade Convention*, 1925 (New York, 1925), p. 165.

ment [would] be impossible." A bit later Hughes told the British Ambassador that the time had come for London's expressions of cordial sentiment to be "translated into something definite." After many harangues about oil, access to mandated areas, and trade with Russia, it was with great relief that Stimson spoke of the United States and Great Britain "working together like two old shoes."³³

Deep concern over revolutionary ferment produced great anxiety. Hughes quite agreed with Colby that the problem was to prevent revolutions without making martyrs of the leaders of colonial or other dissident movements. The despatches of the period are filled with such expressions as "very grave concern," "further depressed," and "deeply regret," in connection with revolutionary activity in China, Latin America, and Europe.³⁴ American foreign service personnel abroad were constantly reminded to report all indications of such unrest. This sensitivity reached a high point when one representative telegraphed as "an example of the failure to assure public safety . . . the throwing of a rock yesterday into the state hospital here." Quite in keeping with this pattern was Washington's conclusion that it would support "any provisional government which gave satisfactory evidence of an intention to re-establish constitutional order."³⁵

Central to American diplomacy of the twenties was the issue of Germany and Japan. And it was in this area that the government ran into trouble with its partners, the large associations of capital. The snag was to convince the bankers of the validity of the long range view. Hoover, Hughes and Stimson all agreed that it was vital to integrate Germany and Japan into the American community. Thus Hughes opposed the French diplomacy of force on the Rhine, and for his own part initiated the Dawes Plan. But the delegation of so much authority to the financiers backfired in 1931. The depression scared the House of Morgan and it refused to extend further credits to Germany. Stimson "blew up." He angrily told the Morgan representative in Paris that this strengthened France and thereby undercut the American program. Interrupted in the midst of this argument by a trans-Atlantic phone call from Hoover, Stimson explained to the president that "if you want to help the cause you are speaking of you will not do it by calling me up, but by calling Tom Lamont." Stimson then turned back to Lamont's agent in

³³ Colby to Wright, November 5, 1920, *National Archives of the United States* (hereafter cited as NA), 574.D1/240b; Hughes, Memorandum of conversation with Geddes, September 20, 1921, NA, 500.A 4/190.5; Stimson, Memorandum of July 20, 1931, NA, 462.00 R 296/4594.5.

³⁴ Colby to Russell, August 13, 1920, NA, 333.3921 L 96/3; Hughes to Cottrell, April 9, 1923, NA, 824.51/174; Hughes to Morales, June 30, 1923, NA, 815.00/2609; same to same, May 15, 1923, NA, 815.00/2574.

³⁵ Koddling to Hughes, October 10, 1924, NA, 375.1123 Coleman and Delong/89; Hughes to Welles, April 10, 1924, NA, 815.00/3077a supplement.

Europe and, using "unregulated language," told the man to abandon his "narrow banking axioms."³⁶

Similar difficulties faced the government in dealing with Japan and China. The main problem was to convince Japan, by persuasion, concession, and the delicate use of diplomatic force, to join the United States in an application of its Latin American policy to China. Washington argued that the era of the crude exploitation of, and the exercise of direct political sovereignty over, backward peoples was past. Instead, the interested powers should agree to develop and exercise a system of absentee authority while increasing the productive capacity and administrative efficiency of China. Japan seemed amenable to the proposal, and at the Washington Conference, Secretary Hughes went a great distance to convince Tokyo of American sincerity. Some writers, such as George Frost Kennan and Adolf A. Berle, claim that the United States did not go far enough.³⁷ This is something of a mystery. For in his efforts to establish "cooperation in the Far East," as Hughes termed it, the Secretary consciously gave Japan "an extraordinarily favorable position."³⁸

Perhaps what Kennan and Berle have in mind is the attitude of Thomas Lamont. In contrast to their perspective on Europe, the bankers took an extremely long range view of Asia. Accepting the implications of the Four and Nine Power Treaties, Lamont began to finance Japan's penetration of the mainland. Hughes and Stimson were trapped. They continued to think in terms of American business men taking care of themselves if given an opportunity, and thus strengthening Washington's position in the world community. Hughes wrote Morgan that he hoped the consortium would become an "important instrumentality of our 'open door' policy."³⁹ But the American members of the banking group refused to antagonize their Japanese and British colleagues, and so vetoed Washington's hope to finance the Chinese Eastern Railway and its efforts to support the Federal Telegraph Company in China.

In this context it is easy to sympathize with Stimson's discomfort when the Japanese Army roared across Manchuria. As he constantly reiterated to the Japanese Ambassador in Washington, Tokyo had come far along the

³⁶ Stimson, Memorandum of talks with representatives of J. P. Morgan and Co., Paris, July 17, 1931, NA, 462.00 R 296/4587.5.

³⁷ G. F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 82; A. A. Berle, Jr., review of H. Feis, *The China Tangle*, in the *New York Times*, Book Review Section, October 4, 1953.

³⁸ Hughes to Judge Hiscock, April 24, 1924, quoted in M. J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes* (2 vols., New York, The Macmillan Co., 1951), II, p. 516; Hughes to Bell, October 22, 1924, NA, 893.51/4699; Hughes, Memorandum of conversations with Kato and Balfour, December 2, 1921, NA, 500.A4b/547.5.

³⁹ Hughes to Morgan, August 8, 1921, NA, 861.77/2184.

road "of bringing itself into alignment with the methods and opinion of the Western World."⁴⁰ Stimson not only wanted to, but did in fact give Japan every chance to continue along that path. So too did President Hoover, whose concern with revolution was so great that he was inclined to view Japanese sovereignty in Manchuria as the best solution. Key men in the State Department shared the president's conclusion.⁴¹

Stimson's insight was not so limited. He realized that his predecessor, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, had been right: the community of interest that America should seek was with the Chinese. The Secretary acknowledged his error to Senator Borah, who had argued just such a thesis since 1917. Stimson's letter to Borah of February 23, 1932, did not say that America should abandon her isolationism, but rather that she had gone too far with the wrong friends. The long and painful process of America's great awakening had begun. But in the meantime President Hoover's insistence that no move should be made toward the Soviet Union, and that the non-recognition of Manchuko should be considered as a formula looking toward conciliation, had opened the door to appeasement.

⁴⁰ Stimson, Memorandum of November 21, 1931, NA, 793.94/2865; and see Stimson, Memorandum of February 27, 1933, NA, 793.94/5953, for a clear review of his changing attitudes.

⁴¹ This writer is greatly indebted to Professor Richard N. Current, University of Illinois, for sharing his extended knowledge of the Manchurian Crisis. Professor Current's study will be published in the spring of 1954 by Rutgers University Press.

CULTURAL CONFLICT IN THE 'TWENTIES

Though the exploration of the 'twenties that has been underway for a number of years has re-examined a number of economic, political, and social aspects of the postwar era, thus far it has touched only lightly at best upon the important sectional and cultural schism that disrupted the progressive coalition, prevented the resurgence of a new political and economic reform movement, and rendered the Democratic party almost impotent.

In branding the 'twenties a decade of indifference, materialism, and apathy, historians have too easily ignored and misjudged much of the intense political activity that marked the decade. For millions of Americans, both in and out of the Democratic party, Al Smith came to symbolize the aspirations and ideals of urban, immigrant America and they rallied to his banner in 1924 and 1928. Millions of others joined or at least sympathized with the Ku Klux Klan, supported the efforts of militant fundamentalism to oust modernism from the church and evolution from the schoolroom, and were indignant over the widespread abrogation of the Eighteenth Amendment and increasing violations of traditional morality and conventions. The idealism and commitment of a substantial part of the American population were channeled not into the old economic and political battles of the Progressive era, but into the new struggles over prohibition, religious liberty, and immigration restriction that were to determine whether or not rural America would be able to maintain and even extend its code of morality and conduct in the face of a changing America.

The gulf that separated the rural followers of William G. McAdoo and the urban followers of Al Smith at the disastrous Democratic convention of 1924 was not economic, for there were few serious economic differences that could not be reconciled, but rather cultural, as symbolized by the heated battle over whether or not the Ku Klux Klan should be named specifically in a religious liberty plank. The Klan came to symbolize this widening cultural and sectional split because it stood for more than simply racial and religious exclusiveness. For a rural, small-town America felt its very foundations being eroded by what Walter Lippmann and others referred to as the "acids of modernity," the Klan's emphasis upon the traditional moral and ethical code, its insistence that America had strayed from the paths and conventions that had made it great, its dire warnings of the continuing dilution of the traditional American fabric, its antipathy to urban mores and values, its oppo-

sition to the modernist movement within the churches, and its hearkening back to a golden age, had meaning and explains why the Klan of the 'twenties was at least as influential in the midwest and far west as in the south. At its height its membership totaled between three and five millions and its force was felt on both the national and local levels of politics.

An understanding of the Klan is prerequisite to an understanding of much of what took place during the 'twenties, yet few studies have helped to clarify the issues that agitated the Klan and motivated its actions. J. M. Mecklin's contemporary study, *The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind* (New York, 1924), is still the best overall account, though it suffers greatly from its contemporaneity. E. H. Loucks, *The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania: A Study in Nativism* (New York, 1936), is a valuable local study. See also M. Harrison, "Gentlemen from Indiana," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXLI (May 1928) 676-86, and R. M. Miller, "A Note on the Relationship between the Protestant Churches and the Revived Ku Klux Klan," *Journal of Social History*, XXII (Aug. 1956) 355-68. W. Lippmann's superb evocation of the spirit of the age in his *A Preface to Morals* (Boston, 1929), P. Carter's incisive study of the religious issues in the 'twenties, *The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel* (Ithaca, 1954), and H. R. Niebuhr's concise and informative definition of fundamentalism in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, V (New York, 1930-34), help set the stage for the actions of the Klan and the analogous fundamentalist movement, but much more needs to be done in this area. (See also P. L. Murphy, "Sources and Nature of Intolerance in the 1920's," *Journal of American History*, LI [June 1964].)

This unfortunate dearth of printed materials on the Klan of the 1920's makes it necessary to turn to the Imperial Wizard and Emperor of that organization itself for aid in understanding the movement. Hiram Wesley Evans, a Texas dentist, who took over the leadership of the Klan in 1922, conveys in this article a truer sense of the meaning of his movement than most scholars have been able to achieve. Evans' insistence that the Klan did not endorse violence or defiance of the law and his desire to relegate such actions to a "lunatic fringe" which he and his colleagues were trying valiantly to expel, cannot, of course, be taken at face value. Many such bits of campaign oratory, together with a number of redundancies, have been deleted, but the essence of Evans' article has in no way been altered. In his pervasive sense of loss, his frustration over the alterations in the America he had been born into, his distrust of and antipathy toward the new urban, immigrant culture that was beginning to come into its own, and the sense of kinship, and even affection, he displays for Americans who resembled himself and shared his values, Evans, for all his hyperbole and mere rhetoric, was speaking for the millions who flocked to the Klan and found in it a bulwark against a world that they neither understood nor desired.

The Klan's Fight for Americanism

HIRAM WESLEY EVANS

The Ku Klux Klan on last Thanksgiving Day passed its tenth anniversary. In one decade it has made a place and won a record for achievement which are almost, if not quite, unique in the history of great popular movements. It has not merely grown from a handful to a membership of millions, from poverty to riches, from obscurity to great influence, from fumbling impotence to the leadership in the greatest cause now before the American people.

. . . The greatest achievement so far has been to formulate, focus, and gain recognition for an idea — the idea of preserving and developing America first and chiefly for the benefit of the children of the pioneers who made America, and only and definitely along the lines of the purpose and spirit of those pioneers. The Klan cannot claim to have created this idea: it has long been a vague stirring in the souls of the plain people. But the Klan can fairly claim to have given it purpose, method, direction and a vehicle. When the Klan first appeared the nation was in the confusion of sudden awakening from the lovely dream of the melting pot, disorganized and helpless before the invasion of aliens and alien ideas. After ten years of the Klan it is in arms for defense. This is our great achievement.

The second is more selfish; we have won the leadership in the movement for Americanism. Except for a few lonesome voices, almost drowned by the clamor of the alien and the alien-minded "Liberal," the Klan alone faces the invader. This is not to say that the Klan has gathered into its membership all who are ready to fight for America. The Klan is the champion, but it is not merely an organization. It is an idea, a faith, a purpose, an organized crusade. No recruit to the cause has ever been really lost. Though men and women drop from the ranks they remain with us in purpose, and can be depended on fully in any crisis. Also, there are many millions who have never joined, but who think and feel and — when called on — fight with us. This is our real strength, and no one who ignores it can hope to understand America today.

Other achievements of these ten years have been the education of the millions of our own membership in citizenship, the suppression of much

Reprinted from *The North American Review* CCXXIII, No. 8 (March 1926) 33-61.

lawlessness and increase of good government wherever we have become strong, the restriction of immigration, and the defeat of the Catholic attempt to seize the Democratic party. All these we have helped, and all are important.

The outstanding proof of both our influence and our service, however, has been in creating, outside our ranks as well as in them, not merely the growing national concentration on the problems of Americanism, but also a growing sentiment against radicalism, cosmopolitanism, and alienism of all kinds. We have produced instead a sane and progressive conservatism along national lines. We have enlisted our racial instincts for the work of preserving and developing our American traditions and customs. This was most strikingly shown in the elections last fall, when the conservative reaction amazed all politicians — especially the LaFollette rout in the Northwest. This reaction added enormously to the plurality of the President, the size of which was the great surprise of the election.

I wish it might fairly be claimed that the Klan from the beginning had this vision of its mission. Instead the beginnings were groping and futile, as well as feeble; they involved errors which long prevented any important achievement. The chief idea of the founders seems to have been merely to start a new fraternal society, based on rather vague sentiments of brotherhood among white Americans, and of loyalty to the nation and to Protestantism. There was also a sentimental reverence for the Klan of the 'Sixties which led to revival of the old name and some of the ritual. There was finally the basic idea of white supremacy, but this was also at the time a mere sentiment, except as it applied to some Negro unrest.

But along with these ideas there shortly appeared others far from laudable. The Klan had remained weak, gaining barely 10,000 members in the first few years. Then the possibility of profit, both in cash and in power, was seen, and soon resulted in a "selling plan" based partly on Southern affection for the old Klan, partly on social conditions in the South, but chiefly on the possibility of inflaming prejudices. They began to "sell hate at \$10 a package."

To us who know the Klan today, its influence, purpose and future, the fact that it can have grown from such beginnings is nothing less than a miracle, possible only through one of those mysterious interventions in human affairs which are called Providence. The fact is, as we see now, that beneath the stupid or dangerous oratory of those early leaders lay certain fundamental truths, quite unseen by them, and then hardly bigger than the vital germ in a grain of corn, but which matured automatically.

The hate and invisible government ideas, however, were what gave the Klan its first great growth, enlisted some 100,000 members, provided wealth

for a few leaders, and brought down upon the organization the condemnation of most of the country, leaving it a reputation from which it has not yet recovered. But even before outside indignation had appeared there began an inside reaction, caused by abuses and excesses and by the first stirrings of the purposes which now dominate. Thus began the reform of the Klan by itself, which gained steadily until it won full control in 1922. It laid the basis for the astounding growth of the last three years, and for the present immense influence.

This reform did more than merely rectify the old abuses; it developed into full life the hidden but vital germs, and released one of the most irresistible forces in human affairs, the fundamental instinct of race pride and loyalty — what Lothrop Stoddard calls “the imperious urge of superior heredity.” Closely associated with it are two other instincts vital to success among the northern races: patriotism, stimulated to unusual activity by the hyphenism revealed in the World War; and spiritual independence, a revival of the individualism which sprang up just as the Nordic races began to assert themselves in their great blossoming of the last four centuries, and which found its chief expression in Protestantism. These ideas gave direction and guidance to the reforms demanded by the rank and file three years ago. They have been further developed, made more definite and more purposeful, and they are the soul of the Klan today.

The direct reforms brought about were several. First was the stopping of any exercise of “invisible government.” This was reinforced by a change in the oath, by which all Klansmen are sworn to uphold legally constituted officers in enforcing the law at all times. One result of this is to be seen in the decrease of lawlessness in Klan territory. We can justly claim credit for the remarkable improvement as regards lynching in the last two years.

The elimination of private profit for officers of the Klan came next and with it went a democratizing of the order. The Klan, being chiefly an organized crusade, cannot operate efficiently on a purely democratic basis, but the autocracy of the early years has been replaced by a system approximating that of the American Government in its early years; final power in the hands of the rank and file, but full power of leadership in the officers they choose.

Another most important reform was a complete change in the method of “propagation” — of recruiting and spreading our gospel. In the early days this had been done very secretly, a high percentage of money had gone to the kleagles — the “sales agents” — there had been a high-pressure appeal to sentimentality, hatred and the invisible government idea, and a tendency to emphasize numbers rather than quality of recruits. Today, instead, the evangelistic emphasis is put on Americanism, Protestant Christianity, and

action through government machinery; an increasing number of the field agents are on salary, lists of possible members are carefully weeded out before any are approached, and those found worth while are won by personal work, backed by open discussion. This has, to be sure, cut down the number of new members accepted, but has greatly increased quality and loyalty, and it has brought amazing gains in strength, particularly in the Mid-West and North.

Most important of all has been the formulation of the true Klan purposes into definite principles. This has been a gradual process. We in the lead found ourselves with a following inspired in many ways beyond our understanding, with beliefs and purposes which they themselves only vaguely understood and could not express, but for the fulfilment of which they depended on us. We found ourselves, too, at the head of an army with unguessable influence to produce results for which responsibility would rest on us — the leaders — but which we had not foreseen and for which we were not prepared. As the solemn responsibility to give right leadership to these millions, and to make right use of this influence, was brought home to us, we were compelled to analyze, put into definite words, and give purpose to these half conscious impulses.

The Klan, therefore, has now come to speak for the great mass of Americans of the old pioneer stock. We believe that it does fairly and faithfully represent them, and our proof lies in their support. To understand the Klan, then, it is necessary to understand the character and present mind of the mass of old-stock Americans. The mass, it must be remembered, as distinguished from the intellectually mongrelized "Liberals."

These are, in the first place, a blend of various peoples of the so-called Nordic race, the race which, with all its faults, has given the world almost the whole of modern civilization. The Klan does not try to represent any people but these.

There is no need to recount the virtues of the American pioneers; but it is too often forgotten that in the pioneer period a selective process of intense rigor went on. From the first only hardy, adventurous and strong men and women dared the pioneer dangers; from among these all but the best died swiftly, so that the new Nordic blend which became the American race was bred up to a point probably the highest in history. This remarkable race character, along with the new-won continent and the new-created nation, made the inheritance of the old-stock Americans the richest ever given to a generation of men.

In spite of it, however, these Nordic Americans for the last generation have found themselves increasingly uncomfortable, and finally deeply distressed. There appeared first confusion in thought and opinion, a groping

and hesitancy about national affairs and private life alike, in sharp contrast to the clear, straightforward purposes of our earlier years. There was futility in religion, too, which was in many ways even more distressing. Presently we began to find that we were dealing with strange ideas; policies that always sounded well, but somehow always made us still more uncomfortable.

Finally came the moral breakdown that has been going on for two decades. One by one all our traditional moral standards went by the boards, or were so disregarded that they ceased to be binding. The sacredness of our Sabbath, of our homes, of chastity, and finally even of our right to teach our own children in our own schools fundamental facts and truths were torn away from us. Those who maintained the old standards did so only in the face of constant ridicule.

Along with this went economic distress. The assurance for the future of our children dwindled. We found our great cities and the control of much of our industry and commerce taken over by strangers, who stacked the cards of success and prosperity against us. Shortly they came to dominate our government. The *bloc* system by which this was done is now familiar to all. Every kind of inhabitant except the Americans gathered in groups which operated as units in politics, under orders of corrupt, self-seeking and un-American leaders, who both by purchase and threat enforced their demands on politicians. Thus it came about that the interests of Americans were always the last to be considered by either national or city governments, and that the native Americans were constantly discriminated against, in business, in legislation and in administrative government.

So the Nordic American today is a stranger in large parts of the land his fathers gave him. Moreover, he is a most unwelcome stranger, one much spit upon, and one to whom even the right to have his own opinions and to work for his own interests is now denied with jeers and revilings. "We must Americanize the Americans," a distinguished immigrant said recently. Can anything more clearly show the state to which the real American has fallen in this country which was once his own?

Our falling birth rate, the result of all this, is proof of our distress. We no longer feel that we can be fair to children we bring into the world, unless we can make sure from the start that they shall have capital or education or both, so that they need never compete with those who now fill the lower rungs of the ladder of success. We dare no longer risk letting our youth "make its own way" in the conditions under which we live. So even our unborn children are being crowded out of their birthright!

All this has been true for years, but it was the World War that gave us our first hint of the real cause of our troubles, and began to crystallize our ideas. The war revealed that millions whom we had allowed to share our

heritage and prosperity, and whom we had assumed had become part of us, were in fact not wholly so. They had other loyalties: each was willing — anxious! — to sacrifice the interests of the country that had given him shelter to the interests of the one he was supposed to have cast off; each in fact did use the freedom and political power we had given him against ourselves whenever he could see any profit for his older loyalty.

This, of course, was chiefly in international affairs, and the excitement caused by the discovery of disloyalty subsided rapidly after the war ended. But it was not forgotten by the Nordic Americans. They had been awakened and alarmed; they began to suspect that the hyphenism which had been shown was only a part of what existed; their quiet was not that of renewed sleep, but of strong men waiting very watchfully. And presently they began to form decisions about all those aliens who were Americans for profit only.

They decided that even the crossing of salt water did not dim a single spot on a leopard; that an alien usually remains an alien no matter what is done to him, what veneer of education he gets, what oaths he takes, nor what public attitudes he adopts. They decided that the melting pot was a ghastly failure, and remembered that the very name was coined by a member of one of the races — the Jews — which most determinedly refuses to melt. They decided that in every way, as well as in politics, the alien in the vast majority of cases is unalterably fixed in his instincts, character, thought and interests by centuries of racial selection and development, that he thinks first for his own people, works only with and for them, cares entirely for their interests, considers himself always one of them, and never an American. They decided that in character, instincts, thought, and purposes — in his whole soul — an alien remains fixedly alien to America and all it means.

They saw, too, that the alien was tearing down the American standard of living, especially in the lower walks. It became clear that while the American can out-work the alien, the alien can so far under-live the American as to force him out of all competitive labor. So they came to realize that the Nordic can easily survive and rule and increase if he holds for himself the advantages won by strength and daring of his ancestors in times of stress and peril, but that if he surrenders those advantages to the peoples who could not share the stress, he will soon be driven below the level at which he can exist by their low standards, low living and fast breeding. And they saw that the low standard aliens of Eastern and Southern Europe were doing just that thing to us.

They learned, though more slowly, that alien ideas are just as dangerous to us as the aliens themselves, no matter how plausible such ideas may sound. With most of the plain people this conclusion is based simply on

the fact that the alien ideas do not work well for them. Others went deeper and came to understand that the differences in racial background, in breeding, instinct, character and emotional point of view are more important than logic. So ideas which may be perfectly healthy for an alien may also be poisonous for Americans.

Finally they learned the great secret of the propagandists; that success in corrupting public opinion depends on putting out the subversive ideas without revealing their source. They came to suspect that "prejudice" against foreign ideas is really a protective device of nature against mental food that may be indigestible. They saw, finally, that the alien leaders in America act on this theory, and that there is a steady flow of alien ideas being spread over the country, always carefully disguised as American.

As they learned all this the Nordic Americans have been gradually arousing themselves to defend their homes and their own kind of civilization. They have not known just how to go about it; the idealist philanthropy and good-natured generosity which led to the philosophy of the melting pot have died hard. Resistance to the peaceful invasion of the immigrant is no such simple matter as snatching up weapons and defending frontiers, nor has it much spectacular emotionalism to draw men to the colors.

The old-stock Americans are learning, however. They have begun to arm themselves for this new type of warfare. Most important, they have broken away from the fetters of the false ideals and philanthropy which put aliens ahead of their own children and their own race.

To do this they have had to reject completely — and perhaps for the moment the rejection is a bit too complete — the whole body of "Liberal" ideas which they had followed with such simple, unquestioning faith. The first and immediate cause of the break with Liberalism was that it had provided no defense against the alien invasion, but instead had excused it — even defended it against Americanism. Liberalism is today charged in the mind of most Americans with nothing less than national, racial and spiritual treason.

But this is only the last of many causes of distrust. The plain people now see that Liberalism has come completely under the dominance of weaklings and parasites whose alien "idealism" reaches its logical peak in the Bolshevik platform of "produce as little as you can, beg or steal from those who do produce, and kill the producer for thinking he is better than you." Not that all Liberalism goes so far, but it all seems to be on that road. The average Liberal idea is apparently that those who can produce should carry the unfit, and let the unfit rule them.

This aberration would have been impossible, of course, if American Lib-

eralism had kept its feet on the ground. Instead it became wholly academic, lost all touch with the plain people, disowned its instincts and common sense, and lived in a world of pure, high, groundless logic.

Worse yet, this became a world without moral standards. Our forefathers had standards — the Liberals today say they were narrow! — and they had consciences and knew that Liberalism must be kept within fixed bounds. They knew that tolerance of things that touch the foundations of the home, of decency, of patriotism or of race loyalty is not lovely but deadly. Modern American Liberalism has no such bounds. If it has a conscience it hides it shamefacedly; if it has any standards it conceals them well. If it has any convictions — but why be absurd? Its boast is that it has none except conviction in its own decadent religion of Liberalism toward everything; toward the right of every man to make a fool or degenerate of himself and to try to corrupt others; in the right of any one to pull the foundations from under the house or poison the wells; in the right of children to play with matches in a powdermill!

The old stock Americans believe in Liberalism, but not in this thing. It has undermined their Constitution and their national customs and institutions, it has corrupted the morals of their children, it has vitiated their thought, it has degenerated and perverted their education, it has tried to destroy their God. They want no more of it. They are trying to get back to decency and common sense.

The old stock "plain people" are no longer alone in their belief as to the nature of the dangers, their causes, and the folly of Liberal thought. Recently men of great education and mind, students of wide reputation, have come to see all this as the plain Americans saw it years before. This was stated by Madison Grant:

The Nordic race . . . if it takes warning in time, may face the future with assurance. Fight it must, but let the fight be not a civil war against its own blood kindred but against the dangerous foreign races, whether they advance sword in hand or in the more insidious guise of beggars at our gates, pleading for admittance to share our prosperity. If we continue to allow them to enter they will in time drive us out of our own land by the mere force of breeding.

The great hope of the future here in America lies in the realization of the working classes that competition of the Nordic with the alien is fatal, whether the latter be the lowly immigrant from Southern or Eastern Europe, or the more obviously dangerous Oriental, against whose standards of living the white man cannot compete. In this country we must look to such of our people — our farmers and artisans — as are still of American blood, to recognize and meet this danger.

Our present condition is the result of following the leadership of idealists and philanthropic doctrinaires.

The chief of Mr. Grant's demands, that the un-American alien be barred out, has already been partly accomplished. It is established as our national policy by overwhelming vote of Congress, after years of delay won by the aliens already here through the political power we gave them. The Klan is proud that it was able to aid this work, which was vital.

But the plain people realize also that merely stopping the alien flood does not restore Americanism, nor even secure us against final utter defeat. America must also defend herself against the enemy within, or we shall be corrupted and conquered by those to whom we have already given shelter.

The first danger is that we shall be overwhelmed, as Mr. Grant forecasts, by the aliens' "mere force of breeding." With the present birthrate, the Nordic stock will have become a hopeless minority within fifty years, and will within two hundred have been choked to death, like grain among weeds. Unless some means is found of making the Nordic feel safe in having children, we are already doomed.

An equal danger is from disunity, so strikingly shown during the war and from a mongrelization of thought and purpose. It is not merely foreign policy that is involved; it is all our thought at home, our morals, education, social conduct — everything. We are already confused and disunited in every way; the alien groups themselves, and the skilful alien propaganda, are both tearing steadily at all that makes for unity in nationhood, or for the soul of Americanism. If the word "integrity" can still be used in its original meaning of singleness of purpose or thought, then we as a nation have lost all integrity. Yet our old American motto includes the words ". . . divided we fall!"

One more point about the present attitude of the old stock American: he has revived and increased his long-standing distrust of the Roman Catholic Church. It is for this that the native Americans, and the Klan as their leader, are most often denounced as intolerant and prejudiced. This is not because we oppose the Catholic more than we do the alien, but because our enemies recognize that patriotism and race loyalty cannot safely be denounced, while our own tradition of religious freedom gives them an opening here, if they can sufficiently confuse the issue.

The fact is, of course, that our quarrel with the Catholics is not religious but political. The Nordic race is, as is well known, almost entirely Protestant, and there remains in its mental heritage an anti-Catholic attitude based on lack of sympathy with the Catholic psychology, on the historic opposition of the Roman Church to the Nordics' struggle for freedom and achievement, and on the memories of persecutions. But this strictly religious prejudice is not now active in America, and so far as I can learn, never has been. I do not know of a single manifestation in recent times of

hostility to any Catholic because of his religion, nor to the Catholic Church because of its beliefs. Certainly the American has always granted to the Catholic not only full religious liberty, without interference or abuse either public or private, but also every civil, social and political equality. Neither the present day Protestant nor the Klan wishes to change this in any degree.

The only possible exception to this statement is worth mentioning only because some people give it far too much importance. This has been in the publication of vicious and ignorant anti-Catholic papers, with small circulation and minute influence. These publications, by the way, the Klan has denounced and helped suppress. If the Catholic Church would do as much by *Tolerance* and some of the equally vicious and ignorant sheets published under its ægis, it could come into court against the American people with cleaner hands.

The real indictment against the Roman Church is that it is, fundamentally and irredeemably, in its leadership, in politics, in thought, and largely in membership, actually and actively alien, un-American and usually anti-American. The old stock Americans, with the exception of the few such of Catholic faith — who are in a class by themselves, standing tragically torn between their faith and their racial and national patriotism — see in the Roman Church today the chief leader of alienism, and the most dangerous alien power with a foothold inside our boundaries. It is this and nothing else that has revived hostility to Catholicism. By no stretch of the imagination can it fairly be called religious prejudice, though, now that the hostility has become active, it does derive some strength from the religious schism.

We Americans see many evidences of Catholic alienism. We believe that its official position and its dogma, its theocratic autocracy and its claim to full authority in temporal as well as spiritual matters, all make it impossible for it as a church, or for its members if they obey it, to coöperate in a free democracy in which Church and State have been separated. It is true that in this country the Roman Church speaks very softly on these points, so that many Catholics do not know them. It is also true that the Roman priests preach Americanism, subject to their own conception of Americanism, of course. But the Roman Church itself makes a point of the divine and unalterable character of its dogma, it has never seen fit to abandon officially any of these un-American attitudes, and it still teaches them in other countries. Until it does renounce them, we cannot believe anything except that they all remain in force, ready to be called into action whenever feasible, and temporarily hushed up only for expediency.

The hierarchical government of the Roman Church is equally at odds with Americanism. The Pope and the whole hierarchy have been for centuries almost wholly Italian. It is nonsense to suppose that a man, by enter-

ing a church, loses his race or national loyalties. The Roman Church today, therefore, is just what its name says — Roman; and it is impossible for its hierarchy or the policies they dictate to be in real sympathy with Americanism. Worse, the Italians have proven to be one of the least assimilable of people. The autocratic nature of the Catholic Church organization, and its suppression of free conscience or free decision, need not be discussed; they are unquestioned. Thus it is fundamental to the Roman Church to demand a supreme loyalty, overshadowing national or race loyalty, to a power that is inevitably alien, and which at the best must inevitably inculcate ideals un-American if not actively anti-American.

We find, too, that even in America, the majority of the leaders and of the priests of the Roman Church are either foreign born, or of foreign parentage and training. They, like other aliens, are unable to teach Americanism if they wish, because both race and education prevent their understanding what it is. The service they give it, even if sincere, can at best produce only confusion of thought. Who would ask an American, for instance, to try to teach Italians their own language, history, and patriotism, even without the complication of religion?

Another difficulty is that the Catholic Church here constantly represents, speaks for and cares for the interests of a large body of alien peoples. Most immigration of recent years, so unassimilable and fundamentally un-American, has been Catholic. The Catholics of American stock have been submerged and almost lost; the aliens and their interests dictate all policies of the Roman Church which are not dictated from Rome itself.

Also, the Roman Church seems to take pains to prevent the assimilation of these people. Its parochial schools, its foreign born priests, the obstacles it places in the way of marriage with Protestants unless the children are bound in advance to Romanism, its persistent use of the foreign languages in church and school, its habit of grouping aliens together and thus creating insoluble alien masses — all these things strongly impede Americanization. Of course they also strengthen and solidify the Catholic Church, and make its work easier, and so are very natural, but the fact remains that they are hostile to Americanism.

Finally, there is the undeniable fact that the Roman Church takes an active part in American politics. It has not been content to accept in good faith the separation of Church and State, and constantly tries through political means to win advantages for itself and its people — in other words, to be a political power in America, as well as a spiritual power. Denials of Catholic activity in politics are too absurd to need discussion. The "Catholic vote" is as well recognized a factor as the "dry vote." All politicians take it for granted.

The facts are that almost everywhere, and especially in the great industrial centers where the Catholics are strongest, they vote almost as a unit, under control of leaders of their own faith, always in support of the interests of the Catholic Church and of Catholic candidates without regard to other interests, and always also in support of alienism whenever there is an issue raised. They vote, in short, not as American citizens, but as aliens and Catholics! They form the biggest, strongest, most cohesive of all the alien *blocs*. On many occasions they form alliances with other alien *blocs* against American interests, as with the Jews in New York today, and with others in the case of the recent opposition to immigration restriction. Incidentally they have been responsible for some of the worst abuses in American politics, and today are the chief support of such machines as that of Brennan in Chicago, Curley in Boston and Tammany in New York.

All this might occur without direct sanction from the Roman Church, though that would not make it less a "Catholic" menace. But the evidence is that the Church acts directly and often controls these activities. The appearance of Roman clergy in "inside" political councils, the occasional necessity of "seeing" a prelate to accomplish political results, and above all the fact that during the fight in the Democratic National Convention of 1924 the hotel lobbies and the corridors of Madison Square Garden were suddenly black with priests, all seem to prove that the Catholic Church acts in politics *as a church*, and that it must bear responsibility for these evils.

This is the indictment of the old-stock Americans against the Roman Church. If at any time it should clear its skirts, should prove its willingness to become American in America, and to be politically an equal among equals with other religious bodies, then Americans would make no indictment of it whatever. But until it does these things it must be opposed as must all other agencies which stand against America's destiny.

. . . This is the general state of mind of the Nordic Americans of the pioneer stock today. Many of them do not understand the reasons for their beliefs so fully as I have stated them, but the state of mind is there beyond doubt, and the reasons are true at all vital points. It is inevitable that these people are now in revolt. This is the movement to which the Klan, more through Providence than its own wisdom, has begun to give leadership.

The Ku Klux Klan, in short, is an organization which gives expression, direction and purpose to the most vital instincts, hopes and resentments of the old stock Americans, provides them with leadership, and is enlisting and preparing them for militant, constructive action toward fulfilling their racial and national destiny. . . . The Klan literally is once more the embattled American farmer and artisan, coördinated into a disciplined and growing army, and launched upon a definite crusade for Americanism!

This Providential history of the Klan, and the Providential place it has come to hold, give it certain definite characteristics. The disadvantages that go with them, as well as the advantages, may as well be admitted at once.

We are a movement of the plain people, very weak in the matter of culture, intellectual support, and trained leadership. We are demanding, and we expect to win, a return of power into the hands of the everyday, not highly cultured, not overly intellectualized, but entirely unspoiled and not de-Americanized, average citizen of the old stock. Our members and leaders are all of this class — the opposition of the intellectuals and liberals who held the leadership, betrayed Americanism, and from whom we expect to wrest control, is almost automatic.

This is undoubtedly a weakness. It lays us open to the charge of being “hicks” and “rubes” and “drivers of second hand Fords.” We admit it. Far worse, it makes it hard for us to state our case and advocate our crusade in the most effective way, for most of us lack skill in language. Worst of all, the need of trained leaders constantly hampers our progress and leads to serious blunders and internal troubles. If the Klan ever should fail it would be from this cause. All this we on the inside know far better than our critics, and regret more. Our leadership is improving, but for many years the Klan will be seeking better leaders, and the leaders praying for greater wisdom.

Serious as this is, and strange though our attitude may seem to the intellectuals, it does not worry us greatly. Every popular movement has suffered from just this handicap, yet the popular movements have been the main-springs of progress, and have usually had to win against the “best people” of their time. Moreover, we can depend on getting this intellectual backing shortly. It is notable that when the plain people begin to win with one of their movements, such as the Klan, the very intellectuals who have scoffed and fought most bitterly presently begin to dig up sound — at least well-sounding! — logic in support of the success. The movement, so far as can be judged, is neither hurt nor helped by this process.

Another weakness is that we have not been able, as yet, to bring home to the whole membership the need of continuous work on organization programmes both local and national. They are too prone to work only at times of crisis and excitement, and then to feel they can let down. Partly, of course, this is inherent in the evangelistic quality of our crusade. It is “strong medicine,” highly emotional, and presently brings on a period of reaction and lethargy. All crusaders and evangelists know this: the whole country saw it after the war. The Klan will not be fully entrenched till it has passed this reaction period, and steadied down for the long pull. That time is only beginning for most of the Klan, which really is hardly three years old.

But we have no fear of the outcome. . . . We believe that there can be no question of the right of the children of the men who made America to own and control America. We believe that when we allowed others to share our heritage, it was by our own generosity and by no right of theirs. We believe that therefore we have every right to protect ourselves when we find that they are betraying our trust and endangering us. We believe, in short, that we have the right to make America *American* and for Americans.

We believe also that only through this kind of a nation, and through development along these lines, can we best serve America, the whole world today, and the greater world yet unborn. We believe the hand of God was in the creation of the American stock and nation. We believe, too, in the right and duty of every man to fight for himself, his own children, his own nation and race. We believe in the parable of the talents, and mean to keep and use those entrusted to us — the race, spirit and nationhood of America!

Finally we believe in the vitality and driving power of our race: a faith based on the record of the Nordics throughout all history, and especially in America. J. P. Morgan had a motto which said, in effect, "Never bet against the future of America." We believe it is equally unsafe to bet against the future of any stock of the Nordic race, especially so finely blended and highly bred a stock as that of the sons of the pioneers. Handicaps, weaknesses, enemies and all, we will win!

Our critics have accused us of being merely a "protest movement," of being frightened; they say we fear alien competition, are in a panic because we cannot hold our own against the foreigners. That is partly true. We are a protest movement — protesting against being robbed. We are afraid of competition with peoples who would destroy our standard of living. We are suffering in many ways, we have been betrayed by our trusted leaders, we are half beaten already. But we are not frightened nor in a panic. We have merely awakened to the fact that we must fight for our own. We are going to fight — and win!

The Klan does not believe that the fact that it is emotional and instinctive, rather than coldly intellectual, is a weakness. All action comes from emotion, rather than from ratiocination. Our emotions and the instincts on which they are based have been bred into us for thousands of years; far longer than reason has had a place in the human brain. They are the many-times distilled product of experience; they still operate much more surely and promptly than reason can. For centuries those who obeyed them have lived and carried on the race; those in whom they were weak, or who failed to obey, have died. They are the foundations of our American civilization, even more than our great historic documents; they can be trusted where the fine-haired reasoning of the denatured intellectuals cannot.

. . . First in the Klansman's mind is patriotism — America for Americans. He believes religiously that a betrayal of Americanism or the American race is treason to the most sacred of trusts, a trust from his fathers and a trust from God. He believes, too, that Americanism can only be achieved if the pioneer stock is kept pure. There is more than race pride in this. Mongrelization has been proven bad. It is only between closely related stocks of the same race that interbreeding has improved men; the kind of interbreeding that went on in the early days of America between English, Dutch, German, Huguenot, Irish and Scotch.

Racial integrity is a very definite thing to the Klansman. It means even more than good citizenship, for a man may be in all ways a good citizen and yet a poor American, unless he has racial understanding of Americanism, and instinctive loyalty to it. It is in no way a reflection on any man to say that he is un-American; it is merely a statement that he is not one of us. It is often not even wise to try to make an American of the best of aliens. What he is may be spoiled without his becoming American. The races and stocks of men are as distinct as breeds of animals, and every boy knows that if one tries to train a bulldog to herd sheep, he has in the end neither a good bulldog nor a good collie.

Americanism, to the Klansman, is a thing of the spirit, a purpose and a point of view, that can only come through instinctive racial understanding. It has, to be sure, certain defined principles, but he does not believe that many aliens understand those principles, even when they use our words in talking about them. Democracy is one, fairdealing, impartial justice, equal opportunity, religious liberty, independence, self-reliance, courage, endurance, acceptance of individual responsibility as well as individual rewards for effort, willingness to sacrifice for the good of his family, his nation and his race before anything else but God, dependence on enlightened conscience for guidance, the right to unhampered development — these are fundamental. But within the bounds they fix there must be the utmost freedom, tolerance, liberalism. In short, the Klansman believes in the greatest possible diversity and individualism within the limits of the American spirit. But he believes also that few aliens can understand that spirit, that fewer try to, and that there must be resistance, intolerance even, toward anything that threatens it, or the fundamental national unity based upon it.

The second word in the Klansman's trilogy is "white." The white race must be supreme, not only in America but in the world. This is equally undebatable, except on the ground that the races might live together, each with full regard for the rights and interests of others, and that those rights and interests would never conflict. Such an idea, of course, is absurd; the colored races today, such as Japan, are clamoring not for equality but for

their supremacy. The whole history of the world, on its broader lines, has been one of race conflicts, wars, subjugation or extinction. This is not pretty, and certainly disagrees with the maudlin theories of cosmopolitanism, but it is truth. The world has been so made that each race must fight for its life, must conquer, accept slavery or die. The Klansman believes that the whites will not become slaves, and he does not intend to die before his time.

Moreover, the future of progress and civilization depends on the continued supremacy of the white race. The forward movement of the world for centuries has come entirely from it. Other races each had its chance and either failed or stuck fast, while white civilization shows no sign of having reached its limit. Until the whites falter, or some colored civilization has a miracle of awakening, there is not a single colored stock that can claim even equality with the white; much less supremacy.

The third of the Klan principles is that Protestantism must be supreme; that Rome shall not rule America. The Klansman believes this not merely because he is a Protestant, nor even because the Colonies that are now our nation were settled for the purpose of wresting America from the control of Rome and establishing a land of free conscience. He believes it also because Protestantism is an essential part of Americanism; without it America could never have been created and without it she cannot go forward. Roman rule would kill it.

Protestantism contains more than religion. It is the expression in religion of the same spirit of independence, self-reliance and freedom which are the highest achievements of the Nordic race. It sprang into being automatically at the time of the great "upsurgence" of strength in the Nordic peoples that opened the spurt of civilization in the fifteenth century. It has been a distinctly Nordic religion, and it has been through this religion that the Nordics have found strength to take leadership of all whites and the supremacy of the earth. Its destruction is the deepest purpose of all other peoples, as that would mean the end of Nordic rule.

It is the only religion that permits the unhampered individual development and the unhampered conscience and action which were necessary in the settling of America. Our pioneers were all Protestants, except for an occasional Irishman — Protestants by nature if not by religion — for though French and Spanish dared and explored and showed great heroism, they made little of the land their own. America was Protestant from birth.

She must remain Protestant, if the Nordic stock is to finish its destiny. We of the old stock Americans could not work — and the work is mostly ours to do, if the record of the past proves anything — if we become priest-ridden, if we had to submit our consciences and limit our activities and suppress our thoughts at the command of any man, much less of a man sitting

upon Seven Hills thousands of miles away. This we will not permit. Rome shall not rule us. Protestantism must be supreme.

Let it be clear what is meant by "supremacy." It is nothing more than power of control, under just laws. It is not imperialism, far less is it autocracy or even aristocracy of a race or stock of men. What it does mean is that we insist on our inherited right to insure our own safety, individually and as a race, to secure the future of our children, to maintain and develop our racial heritage in our own, white, Protestant, American way, without interference. . . . We are accused of injecting old prejudices, hatred, race and religion into politics, of creating an un-American class division, of trying to profit by race and religious enmities, of violating the principle of equality, and of ruining the Democratic party.

Most of these charges are not worth answering. So long as politicians cater to alien racial and religious groups, it is the merest self-defense to have also a Protestant and an American "vote" and to make it respected. The hatred and prejudice are, as has been evident to every candid person, displayed by our enemies and not by us.

As to the charge that the Klan brought race and religion into politics, that simply is not true. That was done by the very people who are now accusing us, because we are cutting into the profits they had been making in politics out of *their* races and *their* religions. Race and religion have for years been used by the aliens as political platforms. The Klan is in no way responsible for this condition. We merely recognized it when others dared not, and we fight it in the open. Our belief is that any man who runs for office or asks political favors, or advocates policies or carries on any other political activity, either as a member of any racial or religious group, or in the interests of or under orders from such a group or of any non-American interest whatever, should be opposed for that very reason. The Klan's ambition is to get race and religion out of politics, and that cannot be done so long as there is any profit in exploiting them. It therefore fights every attempt to use them.

This vicious kind of politics has mostly been more or less secret. We of the Klan wish we could claim credit for bringing the scandal into the open, but we cannot even do that. The open issue was raised for the first time on a national scale at the Democratic National Convention of 1924. This was the doing of the Catholic politicians, who seized upon Catholicism as a cement for holding the anti-McAdoo forces together. The bitter cleavage that followed was inevitable, and it was they — the Catholic leaders — who so nearly wrecked the party and were quite ready to wreck it completely if that would have helped their local Catholic machines.

One of the Klan's chief interests is in education. We believe that it is the duty of government to insure to every child opportunity to develop its nat-

ural abilities to their utmost. We wish to go to the very limit in the improvement of the public schools; so far that there will be no excuse except snobbery for the private schools.

Further, the Klan wishes to restore the Bible to the school, not only because it is part of the world's great heritage in literature and philosophy and has profoundly influenced all white civilization, but because it is the basis on which all Christian religions are built, and to which they must look for their authority. . . . Jews or Catholics are lavish with their caustic criticism of anything American. Nothing is immune; our great men, our historic struggles and sacrifices, our customs and personal traits, our "Puritan consciences" — all have been scarified without mercy. . . . we of the Klan admit that we are intolerant and narrow in a certain sense. . . . We are intolerant of everything that strikes at the foundations of our race, our country or our freedom of worship. We are narrowly opposed to the use of anything alien — race, loyalty to any foreign power or to any religion whatever — as a means to win political power. We are prejudiced against any attempt to use the privileges and opportunities which aliens hold only through our generosity as levers to force us to change our civilization, to wrest from us control of our own country, to exploit us for the benefit of any foreign power — religious or secular — and especially to use America as a tool or cat's-paw for the advantage of any side in the hatreds and quarrels of the Old World. This is our intolerance; based on the sound instincts which have saved us many times from the follies of the intellectuals. We admit it. More and worse, we are proud of it.

. . . The Negro, the Klan considers a special duty and problem of the white American. He is among us through no wish of his; we owe it to him and to ourselves to give him full protection and opportunity. But his limitations are evident; we will not permit him to gain sufficient power to control our civilization. Neither will we delude him with promises of social equality which we know can never be realized. The Klan looks forward to the day when the Negro problem will have been solved on some much saner basis than miscegenation, and when every State will enforce laws making any sex relations between a white and a colored person a crime.

For the alien in general we have sympathy, opportunity, justice, but no permanent welcome unless he becomes truly American. It is our duty to see that he has every chance for this, and we shall be glad to accept him if he does. We hold no rancor against him; his race, instincts, training, mentality and whole outlook of life are usually widely different from ours. We cannot blame him if he adheres to them and attempts to convert us to them, even by force. But we must see that he can never succeed.

The Jew is a more complex problem. His abilities are great, he contributes much to any country where he lives. This is particularly true of the Western Jew, those of the stocks we have known so long. Their separation from us is more religious than racial. When freed from persecution these Jews have shown a tendency to disintegrate and amalgamate. We may hope that shortly, in the free atmosphere of America, Jews of this class will cease to be a problem. Quite different are the Eastern Jews of recent immigration, the Jews known as the Askhenasim. It is interesting to note that anthropologists now tell us that these are not true Jews, but only Judaized Mongols — Chazars. These, unlike the true Hebrew, show a divergence from the American type so great that there seems little hope of their assimilation.

The most menacing and most difficult problem facing America today is this of the permanently unassimilable alien. The only solution so far offered is that of Dr. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard. After admitting that the melting pot has failed — thus supporting the primary position of the Klan! — he adds that there is no hope of creating here a single, homogeneous race-stock of the kind necessary for national unity. He then suggests that, instead, there shall be a congeries of diverse peoples, living together in sweet harmony, and all working for the good of all and of the nation! This solution is on a par with the optimism which foisted the melting pot on us. Diverse races never have lived together in such harmony; race antipathies are too deep and strong. If such a state were possible, the nation would be too disunited for progress. One race always ruled, one always must, and there will be struggle and reprisals till the mastery is established — and bitterness afterwards. And, speaking for us Americans, we have come to realize that if all this could possibly be done, still within a few years we should be supplanted by the “mere force of breeding” of the low standard peoples. We intend to see that the American stock remains supreme. . . .

NOSTALGIA AND PROGRESS IN POPULAR THOUGHT

In his analysis of the reaction to Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight, John W. Ward, Professor of History at Amherst College, shows that in the 'twenties burning nostalgia for the past and fear of the increasing complexity of modern industrial society were by no means confined to rural America. In discussing the ambivalence which accompanied that nostalgia, Professor Ward is treating a modern manifestation of a long-standing national paradox. From their colonial origins Americans have looked to the future even while they clung to the past, have sung of progress though they dreaded change, have assured themselves and the world of America's glorious destiny while they spoke ruefully of America's present decline. The dilemmas posed by Jefferson's earnest desire to foster the greatness of his country, coupled with his fear of the kind of urban, industrialized society without which no nation could hope to be a great power, have appeared again and again in American history. The will toward progress, so important to the American ethos, has forced the acceptance of societal and economic changes that seemed to undermine the cherished values of individualism, agrarianism, and traditional Protestantism.

The desire to have things both ways — to accept the fruits of progress without relinquishing the fundamentals of the old order — goes a long way toward explaining many of the tensions in American life. But this dualism, though important, has not been totally static. If it had been, then, as Professor Ward puts it, we would truly be faced by a mass cultural neurosis. Instead, in spite of the lag between actuality and perception there has been a gradual acceptance of changes and a reordering of desires, expectations, and action. Jefferson, however belatedly and reluctantly, after all did come to see the necessity for the promotion of domestic industry, which as he knew meant the proliferation of urban centers throughout the nation. The continued obsession of late 19th-century America with the symbols of superior agrarian virtue and self-determination appeared in the continued popularity of the McGuffey readers, which virtually ignored all aspects of urban, industrial society, and the phenomenal success of the Horatio Alger stories, which overlooked most of the problems of the new society. Both persisted in the belief that success and failure were simply matters of the will; Man, they insisted, made himself. Yet in spite of the obeisance paid to these symbols, the Americans of that era took a

number of important steps in dealing with the complexities of the age. However much the Populists may have yearned for the simpler problems of the past, they made no attempt to actually bring back the past. In the final analysis they sought to control, not destroy, big business, the railroads, and finance capitalism. So too with the Progressives after them, who defended competition and railed against big business but did relatively little to impede the growth of the large business organizations that a modern industrial technology fostered, and an important segment of them even defended this growth as necessary and beneficial. Americans have dealt with the problems and complexities of their recent past not by seeking to abolish them but by enlarging the vast powers of the federal government, even though this recourse in turn seemed to violate many of their traditional beliefs in the virtues of individualism and local government.

Americans, then, have turned to the past in their ideology and rhetoric more than in their actions. But the persistence of this gap is in itself important and enlightening. If the continuing dualism between a past and a future orientation in American ideology has not prevented action it has at least impeded and shaped action, and helps to make clearer the American approach to a host of modern problems. Using Lindbergh as a symbol to get at the heart of this dualism, Professor Ward illuminates an important and much-neglected aspect of the American ethos.

Other articles that deal with aspects of this problem are C. B. Anderson, "The Metamorphosis of American Agrarian Idealism in the 1920's and 1930's," *Agricultural History*, XXXV (Oct. 1961) 182-188; R. Hofstadter, "Antitrust in America," *Commentary*, XXXVIII (Aug. 1964) 47-53; A. P. Dudden, "Nostalgia and the American," *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXII (Oct.-Dec. 1961) 515-530; and the essay by Paul Johnstone (page 156, above).

The Meaning of Lindbergh's Flight

JOHN W. WARD

On Friday, May 20, 1927, at 7:52 A.M., Charles A. Lindbergh took off in a silver-winged monoplane and flew from the United States to France. With this flight Lindbergh became the first man to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean. The log of flight 33 of "The Spirit of St. Louis" reads: "Roosevelt

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Field, Long Island, New York, to Le Bourget Aerodrome, Paris, France. 33 hrs. 30 min." Thus was the fact of Lindbergh's achievement easily put down. But the meaning of Lindbergh's flight lay hidden in the next sentence of the log: "(Fuselage fabric badly torn by souvenir hunters.)"

When Lindbergh landed at Le Bourget he is supposed to have said, "Well, we've done it." A contemporary writer asked "Did what?" Lindbergh "had no idea of what he had done. He thought he had simply flown from New York to Paris. What he had really done was something far greater. He had fired the imagination of mankind." From the moment of Lindbergh's flight people recognized that something more was involved than the mere fact of the physical leap from New York to Paris. "Lindbergh," wrote John Erskine, "served as a metaphor." But what the metaphor stood for was not easy to say. The *New York Times* remarked then that "there has been no complete and satisfactory explanation of the enthusiasm and acclaim for Captain Lindbergh." Looking back on the celebration of Lindbergh, one can see now that the American people were trying to understand Lindbergh's flight, to grasp its meaning, and through it, perhaps, to grasp the meaning of their own experience. Was the flight the achievement of a heroic, solitary, unaided individual? Or did the flight represent the triumph of the machine, the success of an industrially organized society? These questions were central to the meaning of Lindbergh's flight. They were also central to the lives of the people who made Lindbergh their hero.

The flight demanded attention in its own right, of course, quite apart from whatever significance it might have. Lindbergh's story had all the makings of great drama. Since 1919 there had been a standing prize of \$25,000 to be awarded to the first aviator who could cross the Atlantic in either direction between the United States and France in a heavier-than-air craft. In the spring of 1927 there promised to be what the *New York Times* called "the most spectacular race ever held — 3,600 miles over the open sea to Paris." The scene was dominated by veteran pilots. On the European side were the French aces, Nungesser and Coli; on the American side, Commander Richard E. Byrd, in a big tri-motored Fokker monoplane, led a group of contestants. Besides Byrd, who had already flown over the North Pole, there were Commander Davis, flying a ship named in honor of the American Legion which had put up \$100,000 to finance his attempt, Clarence Chamberlin, who had already set a world's endurance record of more than fifty-one hours in the air in a Bellanca tri-motored plane, and Captain René Fonck, the French war ace, who had come to America to fly a Sikorsky aircraft. The hero was unheard of and unknown. He was on the West Coast supervising the construction of a single-engined plane to cost only ten thousand dollars.

Then fate played its part. It seemed impossible that Lindbergh could get his plane built and east to New York in time to challenge his better equipped and more famous rivals. But in quick succession a series of disasters cleared his path. On April 16, Commander Byrd's "America" crashed on its test flight, crushing the leg of Floyd Bennett who was one of the crew and injuring Byrd's hand and wrist. On April 24, Clarence Chamberlin cracked up in his Bellanca, not seriously, but enough to delay his plans. Then on April 26, Commander Davis and his co-pilot lost their lives as the "American Legion" crashed on its final test flight. In ten days, accidents had stopped all of Lindbergh's American rivals. Nungesser and Coli, however, took off in their romantically named ship, "The White Bird," from Le Bourget on May 8. The world waited and Lindbergh, still on the West Coast, decided to try to fly the Pacific. But Nungesser and Coli were never seen again. As rumors filled the newspapers, as reports came in that the "White Bird" was seen over Newfoundland, over Boston, over the Atlantic, it soon became apparent that Nungesser and Coli had failed, dropping to their death in some unknown grave. Disaster had touched every ship entered in the trans-Atlantic race.

Now, with the stage cleared, Lindbergh entered. He swooped across the continent in two great strides, landing only at St. Louis. The first leg of his flight established a new distance record but all eyes were on the Atlantic and the feat received little notice. Curiously, the first time Lindbergh appeared in the headlines of the New York papers was Friday, the thirteenth. By this time Byrd and Chamberlin were ready once again but the weather had closed in and kept all planes on the ground. Then, after a week of fretful waiting, on the night of May 19, on the way into New York to see "Rio Rita," Lindbergh received a report that the weather was breaking over the ocean. He hurried back to Roosevelt Field to haul his plane out onto a wet, dripping runway. After mechanics painfully loaded the plane's gas by hand, the wind shifted, as fate played its last trick. A muddy runway and an adverse wind. Whatever the elements, whatever the fates, the decisive act is the hero's, and Lindbergh made his choice. Providing a chorus to the action, the *Herald Tribune* reported that Lindbergh lifted the overloaded plane into the sky "by his indomitable will alone."

The parabola of the action was as clean as the arc of Lindbergh's flight. The drama should have ended with the landing of "The Spirit of St. Louis" at Le Bourget. That is where Lindbergh wanted it to end. In "WE," written immediately after the flight, and in *The Spirit of St. Louis*, written twenty-six years later, Lindbergh chose to end his accounts there. But the flight turned out to be only the first act in the part Lindbergh was to play.

Lindbergh was so innocent of his future that on his flight he carried let-

ters of introduction. The hysterical response, first of the French and then of his own countrymen, had been no part of his careful plans. In "WE," after Lindbergh's narrative of the flight, the publisher wrote: "When Lindbergh came to tell the story of his welcome at Paris, London, Brussels, Washington, New York, and St. Louis he found himself up against a tougher problem than flying the Atlantic." So another writer completed the account in the third person. He suggested that "the reason Lindbergh's story is different is that when his plane came to a halt on Le Bourget field that black night in Paris, Lindbergh the man kept on going. The phenomenon of Lindbergh took its start with his flight across the ocean; but in its entirety it was almost as distinct from that flight as though he had never flown at all."

Lindbergh's private life ended with his flight to Paris. The drama was no longer his, it was the public's. "The outburst of unanimous acclaim was at once personal and symbolic," said the *American Review of Reviews*. From the moment of success there were two Lindberghs, the private Lindbergh and the public Lindbergh. The latter was the construction of the imagination of Lindbergh's time, fastened on to an unwilling person. The tragedy of Lindbergh's career is that he could never accept the role assigned him. He always believed he might keep his two lives separate. But from the moment he landed at Le Bourget, Lindbergh became, as the *New Republic* noted, "ours He is no longer permitted to be himself. He is US personified. He is the United States." Ambassador Herrick introduced Lindbergh to the French, saying, "This young man from out of the West brings you better than anything else the spirit of America," and wired to President Coolidge, "Had we searched all America we could not have found a better type than young Lindbergh to represent the spirit and high purpose of our people." This was Lindbergh's fate, to be a type. A writer in the *North American Review* felt that Lindbergh represented "the dominant American character," he "images the best" about the United States. And an ecstatic female in the *American Magazine*, who began by saying that Lindbergh "is a sort of symbol. . . . He is the dream that is in our hearts," concluded that the American public responded so wildly to Lindbergh because of "the thrill of possessing, in him, our dream of what we really and truly want to be." The act of possession was so complete that articles since have attempted to discover the "real" Lindbergh, that enigmatic and taciturn figure behind the public mask. But it is no less difficult to discern the features of the public Lindbergh, that symbolic figure who presented to the imagination of his time all the yearnings and buried desires of its dream for itself.

Lindbergh's flight came at the end of a decade marked by social and political corruption and by a sense of moral loss. The heady idealism of the First

World War had been succeeded by a deep cynicism as to the war's real purpose. The naïve belief that virtue could be legislated was violated by the vast discrepancy between the law and the social habits of prohibition. A philosophy of relativism had become the uneasy rationale of a nation which had formerly believed in moral absolutes. The newspapers agreed that Lindbergh's chief worth was his spiritual and moral value. His story was held to be "in striking contrast with the sordid unhallowed themes that have for months steeped the imaginations and thinking of the people." Or, as another had it, "there is good reason why people should hail Lindbergh and give him honor. He stands out in a grubby world as an inspiration."

Lindbergh gave the American people a glimpse of what they liked to think themselves to be at a time when they feared they had deserted their own vision of themselves. The grubbiness of the twenties had a good deal to do with the shining quality of Lindbergh's success, especially when one remembers that Lindbergh's flight was not as unexampled as our national memory would have it. The Atlantic was not unconquered when Lindbergh flew. A British dirigible had twice crossed the Atlantic before 1919 and on May 8 of that year three naval seaplanes left Rockaway, New York, and one, the NC-4 manned by a crew of five, got through to Plymouth, England. A month later, Captain John Alcock, an Englishman, with Arthur W. Browne, an American, flew the first heavier-than-air land plane across the Atlantic nonstop, from Newfoundland to Ireland, to win twice the money Lindbergh did, a prize of \$50,000 offered by the London *Daily Mail*. Alcock's and Browne's misfortune was to land in a soft and somnolent Irish peat bog instead of before the cheering thousands of London or Paris. Or perhaps they should have flown in 1927.

The wild medley of public acclaim and the homeric strivings of editors make one realize that the response to Lindbergh involved a mass ritual in which America celebrated itself more than it celebrated Lindbergh. Lindbergh's flight was the occasion of a public act of regeneration in which the nation momentarily rededicated itself to something, the loss of which was keenly felt. It was said again and again that "Lindy" taught America "to lift its eyes up to Heaven." Heywood Broun, in his column in the *New York World*, wrote that this "tall young man raised up and let us see the potentialities of the human spirit." Broun felt that the flight proved that, though "we are small and fragile," it "isn't true that there is no health in us." Lindbergh's flight provided the moment, but the meaning of the flight is to be found in the deep and pervasive need for renewal which the flight brought to the surface of public feeling. When Lindbergh appeared at the nation's capital, the *Washington Post* observed, "He was given that frenzied acclaim which comes from the depths of the people." In New York, where 4,000,000

people saw him, a reporter wrote that the dense and vociferous crowds were swept, as Lindbergh passed, "with an emotion tense and inflammable." The *Literary Digest* suggested that the answer to the hero-worship of Lindbergh would "throw an interesting light on the psychology of our times and of the American people."

The *Nation* noted about Lindbergh that "there was something lyric as well as heroic about the apparition of this young Lochinvar who suddenly came out of the West and who flew all unarmed and all alone. It is the kind of stuff which the ancient Greeks would have worked into a myth and the medieval Scots into a border ballad. . . . But what we have in the case of Lindbergh is an actual, an heroic and an exhaustively exposed experience which exists by suggestion in the form of poetry." The *Nation* quickly qualified its statement by observing that reporters were as far as possible from being poets and concluded that the discrepancy between the fact and the celebration of it was not poetry, perhaps, but "magic on a vast scale." Yet the *Nation* might have clung to its insight that the public meaning of Lindbergh's flight was somehow poetic. The vast publicity about Lindbergh corresponds in one vital particular with the poetic vision. Poetry, said William Butler Yeats, contains opposites; so did Lindbergh. Lindbergh did not mean one thing, he meant many things. The image of itself which America contemplated in the public person of Lindbergh was full of conflict; it was, in a word, dramatic.

To heighten the drama, Lindbergh did it alone. He was the "lone eagle" and a full exploration of that fact takes one deep into the emotional meaning of his success. Not only the *Nation* found Sir Walter Scott's lines on Lochinvar appropriate: "he rode all unarmed and he rode all alone." Newspapers and magazines were deluged with amateur poems that vindicated one rhymester's wry comment, "Go conquer the perils / That lurk in the skies — / And you'll get bum poems / Right up to your eyes." The *New York Times*, that alone received more than two hundred poems, observed in trying to summarize the poetic deluge that "the fact that he flew alone made the strongest impression." Another favorite tribute was Kipling's "The Winners," with its refrain, "He travels the fastest who travels alone." The others who had conquered the Atlantic and those like Byrd and Chamberlin who were trying at the same time were not traveling alone and they hardly rode unarmed. Other than Lindbergh, all the contestants in the trans-Atlantic race had unlimited backing, access to the best planes, and all were working in teams, carrying at least one co-pilot to share the long burden of flying the plane. So a writer in the *New York Sun*, in a poem called "The Flying Fool," a nickname that Lindbergh despised, celebrated Lindbergh's flight: ". . . no kingly plane for him; / No endless data, comrades, moneyed

chums; / No boards, no councils, no directors grim — / He plans ALONE . . . and takes luck as it comes."

Upon second thought, it must seem strange that the long distance flight of an airplane, the achievement of a highly advanced and organized technology, should be the occasion for hymns of praise to the solitary unaided man. Yet the National Geographic Society, when it presented a medal to Lindbergh, wrote on the presentation scroll, "Courage, when it goes alone, has ever caught men's imaginations," and compared Lindbergh to Robinson Crusoe and the trailmakers in our own West. But Lindbergh and Robinson Crusoe, the one in his helmet and fur-lined flying coat and the other in his wild goatskin, do not easily co-exist. Even if Robinson Crusoe did have a tidy capital investment in the form of a well-stocked shipwreck, he still did not have a ten thousand dollar machine under him.

Lindbergh, in nearly every remark about his flight and in his own writings about it, resisted the tendency to exploit the flight as the achievement of an individual. He never said "I," he always said "We." The plane was not to go unrecognized. Nevertheless, there persisted a tendency to seize upon the flight as a way of celebrating the self-sufficient individual, so that among many others an Ohio newspaper could describe Lindbergh as this "self-contained, self-reliant, courageous young man [who] ranks among the great pioneers of history." The strategy here was a common one, to make Lindbergh a "pioneer" and thus to link him with a long and vital tradition of individualism in the American experience. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, himself the son of a famous exponent of self-reliance, said to reporters at his home in Oyster Bay that "Captain Lindbergh personifies the daring of youth. Daniel Boone, David Crocket [*sic*], and men of that type played a lone hand and made America. Lindbergh is their lineal descendant." In *Outlook* magazine, immediately below an enthusiastic endorsement of Lindbergh's own remarks on the importance of his machine and his scientific instruments, there was the statement, "Charles Lindbergh is the heir of all that we like to think is best in America. He is of the stuff out of which have been made the pioneers that opened up the wilderness, first on the Atlantic coast, and then in our great West. His are the qualities which we, as a people, must nourish." It is in this mood that one suspects it was important that Lindbergh came out of the West and rode all alone.

Another common metaphor in the attempt to place Lindbergh's exploit was to say that he had opened a new "frontier." To speak of the air as a "frontier" was to invoke an interpretation of the meaning of American history which had sources deep in American experience, but the frontier of the airplane is hardly the frontier of the trailmakers of the old West. Rather than an escape into the self-sufficient simplicity of the American past, the

machine which made Lindbergh's flight possible represented an advance into a complex industrial present. The difficulty lay in using an instance of modern life to celebrate the virtues of the past, to use an extreme development of an urban industrial society to insist upon the significance of the frontier in American life.

A little more than a month after Lindbergh's flight, Joseph K. Hart in *Survey* magazine reached back to Walt Whitman's poem for the title of an article on Lindbergh: "O Pioneer." A school had made Lindbergh an honorary alumnus but Hart protested there was little available evidence "that he was educated in *schools*." "We must look elsewhere for our explanation," Hart wrote and he looked to the experience of Lindbergh's youth when "everything that he ever did . . . he did by himself. He lived more to himself than most boys." And, of course, Lindbergh lived to himself in the only place conceivably possible, in the world of nature, on a Minnesota farm. "There he developed in the companionship of woods and fields, animals and machines, his audaciously natural and simple personality." The word, "machines," jars as it intrudes into Hart's idyllic pastoral landscape and betrays Hart's difficulty in relating the setting of nature upon which he wishes to insist with the fact that its product spent his whole life tinkering with machines, from motorcycles to airplanes. But except for that one word, Hart proceeds in uncritical nostalgia to show that "a lone trip across the Atlantic was not impossible for a boy who had grown up in the solitude of the woods and waters." If Lindbergh was "clear-headed, naif, untrained in the ways of cities," it was because he had "that 'natural simplicity' which Fenimore Cooper used to attribute to the pioneer hero of his *Leatherstocking Tales*." Hart rejected the notion that any student "bent to all the conformities" of formal training could have done what Lindbergh did. "Must we not admit," he asked, "that this pioneering urge remained to this audacious youth because he had never submitted completely to the repressions of the world and its jealous institutions?"

Only those who insist on reason will find it strange that Hart should use the industrial achievement of the airplane to reject the urban, institutionalized world of industrialism. Hart was dealing with something other than reason; he was dealing with the emotion evoked by Lindbergh's solitude. He recognized that people wished to call Lindbergh a "genius" because that "would release him from the ordinary rules of existence." That way, "we could rejoice with him in his triumph, and then go back to the contracted routines of our institutional ways [because] ninety-nine percent of us must be content to be shaped and moulded by the routine ways and forms of the world to the routine tasks of life." It is in the word, "must," that the pathos of this interpretation of the phenomenon of Lindbergh lies. The world had

changed from the open society of the pioneer to the close-knit, interdependent world of a modern machine-oriented civilization. The institutions of a highly corporate industrial society existed as a constant reproach to a people who liked to believe that the meaning of its experience was embodied in the formless, independent life of the frontier. Like Thomas Jefferson who identified American virtue with nature and saw the city as a "great sore" on the public body, Hart concluded that "certainly, in the response that the world — especially the world of great cities — has made to the performance of this mid-western boy, we can read of the homesickness of the human soul, immured in city canyons and routine tasks, for the freer world of youth, for the open spaces of the pioneer, for the joy of battling with nature and clean storms once more on the frontiers of the earth."

The social actuality which made the adulation of Lindbergh possible had its own irony for the notion that America's strength lay in its simple uncomplicated beginnings. For the public response to Lindbergh to have reached the proportions it did, the world had by necessity to be the intricately developed world of modern mass communications. But more than irony was involved. Ultimately, the emotion attached to Lindbergh's flight involved no less than a whole theory about American history. By singling out the fact that Lindbergh rode alone, and by naming him a pioneer of the frontier, the public projected its sense that the source of America's strength lay somewhere in the past and that Lindbergh somehow meant that America must look backward in time to rediscover some lost virtue. The mood was nostalgic and American history was read as a decline, a decline measured in terms of America's advance into an urban, institutionalized way of life which made solitary achievement increasingly beyond the reach of ninety-nine per cent of the people. Because Lindbergh's ancestors were Norse, it was easy to call him a "Viking" and extend the emotion far into the past when all frontiers were open. He became the "Columbus" of another new world to conquer as well as the "Lochinvar" who rode all alone. But there was always the brute, irreducible fact that Lindbergh's exploit was a victory of the machine over the barriers of nature. If the only response to Lindbergh had been a retreat to the past, we would be involved with a mass cultural neurosis, the inability of America to accept reality, the reality of the world in which it lived. But there was another aspect, one in which the public celebrated the machine and the highly organized society of which it was a product. The response to Lindbergh reveals that the American people were deeply torn between conflicting interpretations of their own experience. By calling Lindbergh a pioneer, the people could read into American history the necessity of turning back to the frontier past. Yet the people could also read American history in terms of progress into the industrial future.

They could do this by emphasizing the machine which was involved in Lindbergh's flight.

Lindbergh came back from Europe in an American man-of-war, the cruiser *Memphis*. It seems he had contemplated flying on, around the whole world perhaps, but less adventurous heads prevailed and dictated a surer mode of travel for so valuable a piece of public property. The *New Republic* protested against bringing America's hero of romance home in a warship. If he had returned on a great liner, that would have been one thing. "One's first trip on an ocean-liner is a great adventure — the novelty of it, the many people of all kinds and conditions, floating for a week in a tiny compact world of their own." But to return on the *Memphis*, "to be put on a gray battleship with a collection of people all of the same stripe, in a kind of ship that has as much relation to the life of the sea as a Ford factory has! We might as well have put him in a pneumatic tube and shot him across the Atlantic." The interesting thing about the *New Republic's* protest against the unromantic, regimented life of a battleship is that the image it found appropriate was the Ford assembly line. It was this reaction against the discipline of a mechanized society that probably led to the nostalgic image of Lindbergh as a remnant of a past when romance was possible for the individual, when life held novelty and society was variegated rather than uniform. But what the Ford Assembly Line represents, a society committed to the path of full mechanization, was what lay behind Lindbergh's romantic success. A long piece in the Sunday *New York Times*, "Lindbergh Symbolizes the Genius of America," reminded its readers of the too obvious fact that "without an airplane he could not have flown at all." Lindbergh "is, indeed, the Icarus of the twentieth century; not himself an inventor of his own wings, but a son of that omnipotent Daedalus whose ingenuity has created the modern world." The point was that modern America was the creation of modern industry. Lindbergh "reveres his 'ship' as a noble expression of mechanical wisdom. . . . Yet in this reverence . . . Lindbergh is not an exception. What he means by the Spirit of St. Louis is really the spirit of America. The mechanical genius, which is discerned in Henry Ford as well as in Charles A. Lindbergh, is in the very atmosphere of [the] country." In contrast to a sentiment that feared the enforced discipline of the machine there existed an attitude of reverence for its power.

Lindbergh led the way in the celebration of the machine, not only implicitly by including his plane when he said "we," but by direct statement. In Paris he told newspapermen, "You fellows have not said enough about that wonderful motor." Rarely have two more taciturn figures confronted one another than when Lindbergh returned to Washington and Calvin Coolidge pinned the Distinguished Flying Cross on him, but in his brief

remarks Coolidge found room to express his particular delight that Lindbergh should have given equal credit to the airplane. "For we are proud," said the President, "that in every particular this silent partner represented American genius and industry. I am told that more than 100 separate companies furnished materials, parts or service in its construction."

The flight was not the heroic lone success of a single daring individual, but the climax of the co-operative effort of an elaborately interlocked technology. The day after Coolidge's speech, Lindbergh said at another ceremony in Washington that the honor should "not go to the pilot alone but to American science and genius which had given years of study to the advancement of aeronautics." "Some things," he said, "should be taken into due consideration in connection with our flight that have not heretofore been given due weight. That is just what made this flight possible. It was not the act of a single pilot. It was the culmination of twenty years of aeronautical research and the assembling together of all that was practicable and best in American aviation." "The flight," concluded Lindbergh, "represented American industry."

The worship of the machine which was embodied in the public's response to Lindbergh exalted those very aspects which were denigrated in the celebration of the flight as the work of a heroic individual. Organization and careful method were what lay behind the flight, not individual self-sufficiency and daring romance. One magazine hailed the flight as a "triumph of mechanical engineering." "It is not to be forgotten that this era is the work not so much of brave aviators as of engineers, who have through patient and protracted effort been steadily improving the construction of airplanes." The lesson to be learned from Lindbergh's flight, thought a writer in the *Independent*, "is that the splendid human and material aspects of America need to be organized for the ordinary, matter of fact service of society." The machine meant organization, the careful rationalization of activity of a Ford assembly line, it meant planning, and, if it meant the loss of spontaneous individual action, it meant the material betterment of society. Lindbergh meant not a retreat to the free life of the frontier past but an emergence into the time when "the machine began to take first place in the public mind — the machine and the organization that made its operation possible on a large scale." A poet on this side of the matter wrote, "All day I felt the pull / Of the steel miracle." The machine was not a devilish engine which would enthrall mankind, it was the instrument which would lead to a new paradise. But the direction of history implicit in the machine was toward the future, not the past; the meaning of history was progress, not decline, and America should not lose faith in the future betterment of society. An address by a Harvard professor, picked up by the *Magazine of Business*,

made all this explicit. "We commonly take Social Progress for granted," said Edwin F. Gay, "but the doctrine of Social Progress is one of the great revolutionary ideas which have powerfully affected our modern world." There was a danger, however, that the idea "may be in danger of becoming a commonplace or a butt of criticism." The speaker recognized why this might be. America was "worn and disillusioned after the Great War." Logically, contentment should have gone with so optimistic a creed, yet the American people were losing faith. So Lindbergh filled an emotional need even where a need should have been lacking. "He has come like a shining vision to revive the hope of mankind." The high ideals of faith in progress "had almost come to seem like hollow words to us — but now here he is, emblematic of heroes yet to inhabit this world. Our belief in Social Progress is justified symbolically in him."

It is a long flight from New York to Paris; it is a still longer flight from the fact of Lindbergh's achievement to the burden imposed upon it by the imagination of his time. But it is in that further flight that lies the full meaning of Lindbergh. His role was finally a double one. His flight provided an opportunity for the people to project their own emotions into his act and their emotions involved finally two attitudes toward the meaning of their own experience. One view had it that America represented a brief escape from the course of history, an emergence into a new and open world with the self-sufficient individual at its center. The other said that America represented a stage in historical evolution and that its fulfillment lay in the development of society. For one, the meaning of America lay in the past; for the other in the future. For one, the American ideal was an escape from institutions, from the forms of society, and from limitations put upon the free individual; for the other, the American ideal was the elaboration of the complex institutions which made modern society possible, an acceptance of the discipline of the machine, and the achievement of the individual within a context of which he was only a part. The two views were contradictory but both were possible and both were present in the public's reaction to Lindbergh's flight.

The Sunday newspapers announced that Lindbergh had reached Paris and in the very issue whose front pages were covered with Lindbergh's story the magazine section of the *New York Times* featured an article by the British philosopher, Bertrand Russell. The magazine had, of course, been made up too far in advance to take advantage of the news about Lindbergh. Yet, in a prophetic way, Russell's article was about Lindbergh. Russell hailed the rise to power of the United States because he felt that in the "new life that is America's" in the twentieth century "the new outlook appropriate to machinery [would] become more completely dominant than in the old world."

Russell sensed that some might be unwilling to accept the machine, but "whether we like this new outlook or not," he wrote, "is of little importance." Why one might not was obvious. A society built on the machine, said Russell, meant "the diminution in the value and independence of the individual. Great enterprises tend more and more to be collective, and in an industrialized world the interference of the community with the individual must be more intense." Russell realized that while the cooperative effort involved in machine technology makes man collectively more lordly, it makes the individual more submissive. "I do not see how it is to be avoided," he concluded.

People are not philosophers. They did not see how the conflict between a machine society and the free individual was to be avoided either. But neither were they ready to accept the philosopher's statement of the problem. In Lindbergh, the people celebrated both the self-sufficient individual and the machine. Americans still celebrate both. We cherish the individualism of the American creed at the same time that we worship the machine which increasingly enforces collectivized behavior. Whether we can have both, the freedom of the individual and the power of an organized society, is a question that still haunts our minds. To resolve the conflict that is present in America's celebration of Lindbergh in 1927 is still the task of America.

THE EMERGENCE OF URBAN- IMMIGRANT POLITICAL POWER

Few events illustrate the primacy of the sectional and cultural schism in the 1920's so well as Al Smith's attempt to win first the Presidential nomination of his party and then the Presidency itself. If, as one commentator put it, Warren G. Harding's problem was that he looked like a greater President than any man could possibly be, Al Smith's dilemma was the very opposite: he fit none of the traditional molds for the highest office in the nation. His forebears were not old-stock Americans but Irish-Catholic immigrants; his environment was not small-town America but the tenement-lined streets of New York City; his political successes were attributable to a machine whose very name was anathema throughout the country; his speech, dress, manner epitomized the very forces that threatened rural, small town America.

Smith's Catholicism unquestionably engendered hostility against him, but no more so than his position as spokesman for the urban, immigrant masses, his Tammany Hall connections and loyalties, his antipathy toward prohibition and the Ku Klux Klan. Catholicism, in short, was merely one part of the complex of things that made Smith unacceptable to millions of Americans. This was made clear in 1928 when the very forces that had prevented Smith's nomination four years earlier indicated their willingness to nominate Senator Thomas Walsh of Montana who, like Smith, was a Catholic but unlike him was not a symbol of urban culture and mores. (On this point see P. A. Carter, "The Other Catholic Candidate: The 1928 Presidential Bid of Thomas J. Walsh," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LV [Jan. 1964] 1-8.) During the campaign the Democratic editor, George Fort Milton, warned William G. McAdoo, Smith's chief rival for the nomination in 1924, that Smith's main appeal would be

to every sort of group complex, inferiority attitude and resentment to American standards and ideals which could be contrived. To the aliens who feel that the older America, the America of the Anglo-Saxon stock, is a hateful thing which must be overturned and humiliated; to the northern negroes, who lust for social equality and racial dominance; to the Catholics who have been made to believe that they are entitled to the White House; and to the Jews who likewise are to be instilled with the feeling that this is the time for God's chosen people to chastise America yesteryear.

If the dominance of such groups represents the new America which Smith is seeking to arouse, the Old America, the America of Jackson and of Lincoln and Wilson, should rise up in wrath and defeat it.

And, following Smith's defeat, the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* noted:

America is not yet dominated by its great cities. Control of its destinies still remains in the smaller communities and rural regions, with their traditional conservatism and solid virtues. . . . Main Street is still the principal thoroughfare of the nation.

(For numerous examples of anti-urban rhetoric in the 1928 campaign, see E. A. Moore, *A Catholic Runs for President* [New York, 1956]).

Richard Hofstadter, Professor of History at Columbia University, in the following article stresses a number of points that are too frequently overlooked in discussions of the campaign of 1928: that no Democrat could have beaten Hoover, and that Smith probably ran a better race than any other Democrat at that time would have been capable of. This was not true because of the issues stated in the campaign. Although Smith had a reputation as a reform governor, he waged a notably conservative campaign — ostensibly calculated to win the support of business interests — as R. Peel and T. Donnelly in their study, *The 1928 Campaign* (New York, 1931), have shown. Smith's Catholicism was clearly important in arousing the interest and winning the votes of large numbers of urban Catholics, but this point must not be exaggerated since the Democratic party had long held the allegiance of urban Catholic voters. Smith's appeal to millions of urban Americans and his electoral success in the large urban centers had less to do with his economic, social, or even religious positions than with the fact that he seemed to represent the new urban America more truly than any major Presidential candidate in American history.

Smith's success in the cities is analyzed by S. J. Eldersveld, "The Influence of Metropolitan Party Pluralities in Presidential Elections since 1920," *American Political Science Review*, XLIII (Dec. 1949) 1189–1206, and its meaning is discussed by S. Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (Garden City, 1952). The role of the Catholic vote in Presidential elections is discussed in two articles by S. M. Lipset, "Religion and Politics in American History," in *Religious Conflict in America*, E. Raab, ed., (Garden City, 1964), and "Some Statistics on Bigotry in Voting," *Commentary*, XXX (Oct. 1960) 286–290. For an interesting long-range discussion of the city in politics, see C. N. Degler, "American Political Parties and The Rise of the City," *Journal of American History*, LI (June 1964).

Could a Protestant Have Beaten Hoover in 1928?

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

My generation was raised upon the cliché that no Catholic can be elected to the Presidency. This cliché is based upon one historical experience — Al Smith's losing campaign in 1928, during which the notion that a Catholic cannot be elected was often referred to as an "unwritten law."

Those who are still convinced that the unwritten law exists find the case of Al Smith conclusive. A few undeniable facts fit their argument. In a massive campaign, waged partly in the open and partly at the level of whispers and snickers, Smith's religion was used against him. This intolerance was repudiated by his opponent, but no one doubts that it affected many voters, and that hundreds of thousands, especially in the South and Middle West, voted against Smith partly or largely on this account. He lost the electoral votes of states in the Solid South that no Democratic candidate since the Civil War had ever come close to losing. He was overwhelmed by Hoover at the polls, receiving 40.8 per cent of the total popular vote as compared to Hoover's 58.1 per cent. He had only eighty-seven electoral votes to Hoover's 444, and in this respect no Democrat since the days of Jackson had fared so badly.

Although historians and political scientists have been careful in their generalizations about the role of religion in the outcome of the 1928 campaign, glib conclusions have been drawn in popular legend, and even among the educated public. Only recently William E. Bohn, writing in the *New Leader*, said of Smith: "He was defeated for the worst of reasons — because he was a Catholic." Absurd as it is, this notion has been too seldom challenged in public discussion. A little thoughtful attention to the history of the 1920's will convince almost any student that there was not a Democrat alive, Protestant or Catholic, who could have beaten Hoover in 1928.

The overwhelming character of Hoover's victory should itself suggest to us that the religious issue may not have been decisive. If the election had been very close in a number of decisive states, it might be easier to believe that the religious issue had tipped the balance and given the victory to

Hoover. In fact, so far as the electoral vote is concerned, we know only that religious bias swung the votes of Florida and Texas and four normally or invariably Democratic states of the upper South into Hoover's column. But if Smith had won the electoral votes of all these states, he would still have been very far from winning. Even if he had then also added the few Northern states in which he ran reasonably well (that is, where he had forty-five per cent or more of the major-party vote), his electoral vote would still have been only half as large as Hoover's.

My contention is not that the religious issue was unimportant in the campaign, but that it worked both ways. The prime fallacy in the popular view of the 1928 election lies in noticing only what Smith lost from the religious issue and ignoring what he may have gained. Of course the number of voters who were decisively influenced by the religious issue is something that eludes exact measurement. But it is vital to remember that there are two such imponderables to be considered: not only the number of voters who voted *against* Smith but also the number who voted *for* him because of his religion. Smith's Catholicism, a grave liability in some areas, was a great asset in others. He made about as good a showing as could have been expected from any Democrat that year. Taken by itself, his religion proves nothing conclusively about the effect of Catholic adherence on a future Presidential candidacy.

Perhaps the most helpful way of isolating the significance of the religious issue in 1928 and chopping it down to size would be to imagine the difficulties the Democratic nominee would have had to face that year if he had been a Protestant.

HOOVER, "THE WONDER"

Above all, the Democrats were confronted with the overwhelming fact of prosperity. After seven years of Republican control, the golden glow was glowing more brightly than ever before. The business index was approaching its 1929 peak at the time the election took place, and the number of unemployed, though growing considerably, was only a little more than three per cent of the total labor force. In the history of the Presidency since 1892, no incumbent party has been turned out of power without the jarring effect of a depression, a war, or — as in 1912 — a party split. Polls under Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower have shown that the popularity of a President in peace-time tends to fluctuate along with the business cycle. In the autumn of 1928 the business cycle was voting Republican.

A second consideration working against the Democrats — one easily forgotten by Americans who have come to political maturity after 1930 — was

the immense prestige of Herbert Hoover. The dour, ultraconservative image of Mr. Hoover that is called up in the minds of his critics in both parties today was not the conventional image before the Great Depression. A successful relief administrator during the First World War, Hoover had won universal acclaim as an effective humanitarian. John Maynard Keynes had written of him that he was "the only man who emerged from the ordeal of Paris with an enhanced reputation." Both parties had hoped to have him in their ranks in 1920, much as both would have welcomed Eisenhower in 1948. It is one of the amusing ironies of our history that Franklin D. Roosevelt had hoped to promote him for the Presidency in 1920. "He is certainly a wonder," F.D.R. wrote in January of that year, "and I wish we could make him President of the United States. There could not be a better one."

As Secretary of Commerce, Hoover was one of the Cabinet members who survived the disaster of the Harding administration with a reputation largely untainted and undimmed. Even the liberals, though disappointed by his attitudes on several public questions, still kept an open mind about him, and some thought of him as one of the more progressive leaders of his party. Hoover's record inspired confidence that he would be an excellent custodian of prosperity. He took over the Republican standard from Coolidge with what appeared to be rosy prospects.

A third and strangely unremembered aspect of the 1928 candidacy was the hopeless condition of the Democratic Party when Smith took it over. Since the days of Bryan and McKinley the Democratic Party had been almost a permanent minority party. Between 1896 and 1908, no Democratic Presidential candidate had won more than 45.9 per cent of the total popular vote, and Woodrow Wilson's election in 1912 had been possible only because of the Republican split between Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. Elected as a minority President in 1912, with 41.8 per cent of the popular vote, Wilson was very narrowly re-elected in 1916, partly on the strength of his progressive achievements, and partly because of his success thus far in staying out of the war. Our entry into the war, the unpopularity of the peace, and the sweeping reaction against Wilson and all those associated with him left the postwar Democratic Party in ruins. As measured by the popular vote, the victory recorded by Harding over Cox in 1920 was the most decisive victory ever scored by a Presidential candidate.

Already deprived of the allegiance of almost two-thirds of the voting public in 1920, the Democrats themselves reduced their party to a shambles in 1924. Here the religious issue played a major part, but one that cannot be disentangled from related issues. The Democrats came to their 1924 convention sharply divided between the rural, dry, Protestant anti-Tammany contingent supporting Wilson's son-in-law William G. McAdoo and the urban,

immigrant, Catholic, wet contingent supporting Smith. They wrangled furiously over a resolution condemning the Ku Klux Klan, and in the end narrowly failed to adopt it. The Smith and McAdoo forces fell into such an interminable Donnybrook that it became clear that the nomination would be worthless to the man who got it. John W. Davis, who was finally settled upon at the 103rd ballot by an exhausted mob of delegates, was unable in his campaign to exploit effectively even the ghastly scandals of the Harding administration. The support of most liberals that year went to Robert M. La Follette, who polled 4,892,000 votes on an independent ticket. Davis polled only 8,385,000, against Coolidge's 15,718,000.

Although the Democrats still held a respectable contingent in Congress, it seemed that for all practical purposes the two-party system had ceased to function at the level of Presidential politics. The outcome of the mid-term Congressional elections of 1926 confirmed the general impression that the country was overwhelmingly Republican. Normally, the party in power expects to lose a substantial number of seats in these off-year elections. In the five mid-term elections from 1906 to 1922, for instance, the average loss had been sixty seats. In 1926 the Republicans lost only ten seats. In the summer of the following year F.D.R. confided to Josephus Daniels that he thought no Democrat could win in 1928 if "the present undoubted general prosperity continues."

Roosevelt's view was shared by most informed observers. Frank R. Kent, the veteran journalist and historian of the Democratic Party, pointing out that it was "without unity, intelligence, or courage . . . without leaders, without an issue or policy or program," had stated in 1926 that "no one capable of clear political judgment now believes it can be vitalized sufficiently to put up a formidable fight in the next Presidential campaign unless a political miracle occurs." Walter Lippmann observed that the Republicans could go into any campaign "knowing that normally there are enough Republicans to win. They do not have to convert anybody, but merely to prevent about ten per cent of their supporters from backsliding." In 1927 Lippmann thought (quite rightly) that Smith, though a losing candidate, would be the best the Democrats could find, and that "the best way for the Democrats to look at 1928 is to look beyond to 1932." After Smith's nomination, Lippmann remarked that the New Yorker had inherited nothing more than a party label, a small core of electoral votes, "two warring factions bound together by no common ideas," and a party "as nearly bankrupt intellectually as it is possible to be." Smith's task, he said, "is to re-create the Democratic party."

An anonymous "Democrat" writing in the *Century* magazine pointed out that practically every commentator who had written on the subject started

from the premise that the Donkey was sick. The Democrats, he said, "know perfectly well that the Donkey can not win," and were thinking only of finding a Presidential candidate who could help their local tickets. He advised that the party give up altogether the goal of winning the Presidency and concentrate for the moment on capturing Congress, where it still had at least a chance. This was the situation that any Democratic nominee had to cope with in 1928.

BROWN DERBY

Finally, it should be remembered that in addition to their other handicaps the Democrats had no good issue. The tariff bores most voters, especially during prosperity. Prohibition did not bore them, and its failure was a usable issue in some areas, but a firm wet stand still seemed likely to lose more votes than it would gain. There were, of course, pockets of economic discontent. The most important of these was among farmers. Unfortunately, the most outspoken defenders of the farmers' interests outside the South were chiefly Republican insurgents in Congress who (with the exception of George W. Norris) were not bolting their party in a winning year.

A Midwestern Democrat might have done better than Smith in the farm areas, but it would have been difficult for any Eastern city Democrat to capitalize on the farm problem. F.D.R. had remarked in 1927 that he did not believe the Western farmers would vote Democratic "in sufficient numbers [for a Democratic victory] even if they are starving." Here his sectional and urban background was quite as much a handicap for Smith as his religion. It was difficult to persuade farmers that the man from the sidewalks of New York understood or felt deeply about their problems. Cartoons of Smith in his brown derby and a gaudy tie peering over a farm fence were more formidable than anything the New Yorker could say on the farm problem. (This was a handicap which F.D.R. was able to overcome four years later, not merely because his upstate residence and his tree farm helped establish the image of a rural squire, but also because he had spent years traveling and cultivating political friendships in the agricultural states.)

If we suppose, then, that a Protestant had been nominated by the Democrats in 1928, what could his supporters realistically have expected? They might have hoped that, aside from helping some local candidacies, he could do three things: hold the minimal areas of Democratic strength, exploit residual areas of discontent to extend Democratic influence, and finally wage his campaign in such spirit and with such effectiveness as to restore the unity of the party and strengthen its morale for future campaigns. Smith did not, of course, succeed in the first of these, since he lost states in the

Solid South. His failure here was what showed up on the electoral charts. Relatively unnoticed (though not unnoticed by Smith himself) was that he far exceeded what might have been expected on the second of these objectives, and that he did extremely well on the third.

THE WARRIOR'S FIGHT

Smith's showing is impressive when compared with that of his two post-war predecessors. The Democratic Presidential vote, which had been 9,128,000 for Cox and had sunk to 8,385,000 for Davis, was raised by Smith to 15,016,000. Cox had had only 34.1 per cent of the popular vote, Davis 28.8 per cent. After these two disastrous campaigns, the "Happy Warrior," in restoring his party's percentage to 40.8 per cent, had at least brought it to within hailing distance of the "normal" Democratic minority vote of the prewar years. The fact that he outdistanced his two predecessors by this much should arouse our curiosity about the sources of his gains.

Both 1928 candidates were immensely successful in overcoming voter apathy and bringing the public out to the polls. In 1924 only 51 per cent of the eligible voters had turned out; in 1928 it was 67.5 per cent — a striking show of interest for a year of prosperity. If we compare Smith with his Democratic predecessor and Hoover with his Republican predecessor, we find that the Democratic vote rose by 6,631,000 from Davis to Smith and the Republican vote rose by 5,673,000 from Coolidge to Hoover. Smith thus gained almost a million more votes for his party than Hoover did. He gained seventy-six per cent over Davis's vote and sixty-four per cent over Cox's. By comparison, Hoover gained thirty-six per cent on Coolidge and thirty-two per cent on Harding.

If Smith's religion had hurt him as badly on a nation-wide scale as we are expected to believe, it seems incredible that he should thus have outgained Hoover. In broad outline, what happened seems reasonably clear. There was a Catholic vote as well as a Protestant vote. (Neither, of course, can be isolated and measured with finality, because they were parts of a Catholic-wet-immigrant complex and a Protestant-dry-nativist complex.) Even though the country was two-thirds Protestant, Catholic voters were animated in equal or greater numbers to turn out and vote. Many of them were from the immigrant stocks that had poured into the country by the millions before the First World War, and among them there were large numbers of new citizens who had never before been sufficiently excited by unfamiliar American domestic issues to bring them out to the polls. The number of previously unactivated Smith voters seems to have been much larger than the number of unactivated Hoover voters. But the distribution of the newly

activated Protestant-dry voters and Catholic-wet voters was such that Smith lost some Southern votes in the electoral college. This, together with the overwhelming nature of the returns, obscured what he did achieve.

Not the least of Smith's achievements was to unify and remold his party. In the recent past the Democratic Party, under the leadership of men like Bryan, Wilson, and Cox, had been based mainly upon strength in the agrarian South and West. The Republican Party, as measured by the distribution of urban seats in Congress and popular votes in Presidential campaigns, had been the dominant metropolitan party. Even in his losing campaign, however, Smith turned the normally huge Republican pluralities in the twelve largest cities into a slender Democratic plurality. He brought into the voting stream of the Democratic Party ethnic groups that had never taken part in politics and others that had been mainly Republican. He extricated his party from its past dependence on agrarian interests and made it known to the great urban populations. He lost a campaign that had to be lost, but in such a way as to restore his party as an effective opposition and to pave the way for the victories of F.D.R. While he had to pay a political price for his religion, it must also be counted among the personal characteristics that made these achievements possible.

HERBERT HOOVER
AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The importance of veteran journalist Walter Lippmann's article lies partly in its thesis that the New Deal followed in the footsteps of the Hoover program for dealing with the depression, but even more in the evidence he presents to show that Hoover was far from the totally incapable, do-nothing President of popular legend. Both Hoover's writings in the 'twenties and his actions as Secretary of Commerce under Harding and Coolidge made it clear that he was never an apostle of a simple-minded laissez-faire policy. He transformed the Department of Commerce into one of the most vigorous agencies of the government; through its machinery he helped to draft trade-association agreements for the self-regulation of industry, to promote foreign trade, to regulate certain areas of communications, and to aid in the relief of disasters. But if Hoover was willing to countenance vigorous government initiative, he was equally insistent upon establishing clear and rigid demarcations between the proper spheres for federal, state, local, and individual (including corporate) action. Though the crisis of 1929 and after was to force him to violate his own precepts more than once, he was remarkably successful in adhering to them. Nevertheless, his depression actions were, as Lippmann indicates, more decisive than those of any of his predecessors and they deserve more attention than historians have given them.

Equally important and enlightening, however, are those areas in which Hoover refused to act, but these Lippmann unfortunately neglects. Hoover's reluctance to embark upon a federal relief program, his insistence upon self-liquidating public-works projects, his refusal to have the government dispense direct aid to individuals, his unwillingness to depart from the voluntaristic principle in his agricultural, industrial, and labor programs, the difficulty he had in admitting the seriousness of the situation, all do constitute differences between his actions and those of his successor and require an explanation.

Since Hoover's philosophy was more thoroughly articulated than those of most American politicians, it is not implausible to search here for a key to his actions. That philosophy is well stated in Hoover's own *American Individualism* (Garden City, 1922). Analyzing Hoover's actions by comparing them with his beliefs, Professor Richard Hofstadter has argued that Hoover was an ideologue—a "Utopian Capitalist"—who was paralyzed by his own philosophy. See his essay

on Hoover in *The American Political Tradition* (New York, 1948). In "The Ordeal of Herbert Hoover," *The Yale Review*, LII (Summer 1963) 563-583, C. N. Degler maintains that Hoover was "a transitional figure in the development of the government as an active force in the economy in times of depression." Although he too attributes many of the failures of Hoover's program to Hoover's philosophy, he nevertheless concludes that "probably no government program then thought permissible could have been any more successful." The genesis of one of Hoover's most important depression agencies is discussed in G. D. Nash, "Herbert Hoover and the Origins of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVI (Dec. 1959) 455-468. The best account of Hoover's Presidency is H. G. Warren's *Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression* (New York, 1959).

The Permanent New Deal

WALTER LIPPMANN

It would be useful to know whether the many experiments of the past six years are merely a response to a passing emergency or whether they signify lasting changes in the relation between government and the economic order. A satisfactory answer to this question would not stop with a general conclusion that this is a rapidly changing world. The answer ought to carry conviction only if it identifies an important new function of government, defines it, and demonstrates the reason why there is a presumption of permanency. Burke has said that "one of the finest problems in legislation" is "to determine what the state ought to take upon itself to direct by the public wisdom, and what it ought to leave, with as little interference as possible, to individual exertion." Our inquiry is to find out, if we can, whether it has already been determined by historical circumstance that the state must henceforth direct certain affairs which hitherto have been left to private exertion.

It may be that we no longer have that perfect freedom of choice which Burke's remark implies, that a fundamental decision has already been made, and that our freedom to choose what ought to be the province of government is limited by that decision. Thus, for example, the question of American independence was a real one before 1776; it was no longer an open

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question after the surrender of Cornwallis. The issue of a federal government as against a loose confederation was decided when Washington was inaugurated. The right of secession ceased to be real after Appomattox. President Wilson's plan of January, 1918, to create a federal state out of the old Austro-Hungarian empire passed into limbo when the subject nationalities revolted and declared their independence. After each of these decisive events the real issues were transformed. Must it be said that in an analogous sense we have recently passed decisively into a new relation between the government and the national economy?

Obviously, a contemporary opinion of this sort will be highly vulnerable. Not all the seedlings will become trees; to attempt to say which ones will flourish, which ones will wither away, is to enter a realm where certainty is impossible. Yet the living generation can hardly defer the attempt to understand its own actions because posterity will understand them better. Posterity will know — whereas we can only predict. It will see the consequences. We can only anticipate them. It will not be biassed by our interests and our ignorance and our moods. We can only attempt to discount them. The disadvantages of foresight as compared with hindsight are insuperable. Yet somehow or other we have to find a method of analysis that will discount our bias and provide a reasonably objective criterion with which to distinguish the transitory from the permanent.

It has occurred to me that by a rather extraordinary accident there has been something like a controlled scientific demonstration. Perhaps we can take advantage of it in this inquiry. The Great Depression has run nearly six years. During the first half of this period Mr. Hoover and the Republicans were in power; during the second half, Mr. Roosevelt and the Democrats. They profess to be deeply opposed. Would it not be reasonable to assume that where we find a new principle and a new function of government common to both Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt, there is a strong presumption that we are in the presence of a change due to historical forces that transcend individuals and parties and their articulate programmes? It is not proof. But proof is not to be had. It is merely a presumption. Is it not a strong presumption? Is there any other criterion available which is less likely to be the rationalization of our individual preferences? Is there any which more effectively discounts partisan bias? Or any which conforms more closely to ordinary experience? When men who think differently behave alike, is it not probable that they are both responding to forces strong enough to deserve our attention?

Before we can begin to use this method of analysis we have to deal with the impression that the two Administrations are so radically different that they have nothing important in common. The partisans of both have tried

to fix this opinion in the public mind. They would like us to believe that a new era began on March 4, 1933. They would have us believe that Mr. Hoover was the faithful defender of the established traditions and that Mr. Roosevelt is the revolutionary pioneer of a New Deal. Though it will outrage the supporters of both men, I must argue that this is not history but partisan mythology: that though the two Presidents have somewhat different sympathies and allegiances, though they profess somewhat different purposes, though they have somewhat different constituencies to please, though they have resorted to somewhat different devices, yet in their fundamental conceptions of the functions of government they are much nearer to one another than either is, let us say, to Calvin Coolidge or to Grover Cleveland.

I shall have to contend that if there has been anything in the nature of a sharp break with the past, the break occurred not in March, 1933, when Mr. Roosevelt was inaugurated but in the autumn of 1929 when, with the collapse of the post-war prosperity, President Hoover assumed the responsibility for recovery. No doubt, it was inevitable that he should have done this since he had been elected on the promise of four more years of prosperity. But that does not alter the fact that the policy initiated by President Hoover in the autumn of 1929 was something utterly unprecedented in American history. The national government undertook to make the whole economic order operate prosperously. In the language of Burke the state attempted to direct by the public wisdom a recovery in the business cycle which had hitherto been left with as little interference as possible to individual exertion. President Hoover, let us remember, did not merely seek to create an atmosphere of confidence in which private initiative could act; he intervened at every point in the national economy where he felt that something needed to be done.

For that reason, it may be said, I believe, that his historic position as a radical innovator has been greatly underestimated and that Mr. Roosevelt's pioneering has been greatly exaggerated. It was Mr. Hoover who abandoned the principles of *laissez faire* in relation to the business cycle, established the conviction that prosperity and depression can be publicly controlled by political action, and drove out of the public consciousness the old idea that depressions must be overcome by private adjustment.

Whether that was good or bad, necessary or unnecessary, does not concern us here. The point is that a radically new conception of the functions of government was established in the autumn of 1929. The subsequent course of events becomes utterly unintelligible if we accept naïvely what the partisans of Mr. Hoover and of Mr. Roosevelt say today. Only those who have forgotten the inclusive and persistent experimentation before

March, 1933, can, I think, fail to see that most of President Roosevelt's recovery programme is an evolution from President Hoover's programme; and that there is a continuity of principle; and that both programmes are derived from the unprecedented doctrine that the government is charged with responsibility for the successful operation of the economic order and the maintenance of a satisfactory standard of life for all classes in the nation. After October, 1929, that doctrine was the major premise of the Hoover Administration. It is the major premise of the Roosevelt Administration. Never, except in time of war, has it been the major premise in the policies of any other President. Did Harding in 1921 or Cleveland in 1893 or Grant in 1873 suppose that it was the President's duty to tell farmers and business men and bankers, debtors and creditors, employers and employees, governors and mayors, what to do in order to restore prosperity, or that he had a right to draw upon all the powers of government and all the resources of the nation?

Yet that is precisely what President Hoover, beginning in the autumn of 1929, took to be his duty and his right. Not until his time had any American President assumed this specific responsibility with all the expansion of the functions of government which it necessarily implies. Yet when the change occurred, there was almost no comment. Almost no one raised his voice to challenge Mr. Hoover on the ground of the individualistic tradition or of the accepted limitations of the federal power. So we have a strong presumption that the great change was generated by historic circumstances that are stronger than the ordinary opinions of men.

On August 11, 1932, in accepting his renomination, President Hoover declared that when "the forces of destruction" invaded the American economy and brought about "bank and business failures, demoralization of security and real property values, commodity prices and employment, . . . two courses were open. We might have done nothing. That would have been utter ruin. Instead, we met the situation with proposals to private business and the Congress of the most gigantic programme of economic defense and counter-attack ever evolved in the history of the republic."

Mr. Hoover made it perfectly plain that he had departed from the individualistic doctrine that depression must be liquidated by individual adjustment. "The function of the federal government in these times," he said, "is to *use its reserve powers* and its strength *for the protection of citizens and local governments* by support to our institutions *against forces beyond their control.*" He was insistent that this defensive and compensatory action by the government should not destroy but should on the contrary revive private and local enterprise and responsibility. But he had no doubts, theo-

retical or practical, indeed he proudly declared that "we have not feared boldly to adopt unprecedented measures to meet the unprecedented violence of the storm."

He then went on to describe his unprecedented measures. He had called the leaders of business and of labor and of agriculture "to meet with me and induced them, by their own initiative, to organize against panic":

- (1) "To uphold wages until the cost of living was adjusted."
- (2) "To spread existing employment through shortened hours."
- (3) "To advance construction work, public and private, against future need."

He then described how he had mobilized the relief agencies and "when it became advisable to strengthen the States who could no longer carry the full burden of relief to distress, I held that the federal government should do so through loans to the States." He said that "in aid to unemployment we are expending some six hundred millions in federal construction and such public works as can be justified as bringing early and definite returns"; that in addition he had made "provision of one billion five hundred millions of loans to self-supporting works so that we may increase employment in productive labor."

He went on to tell how he had used government credit (1) to strengthen the capital of Federal Land Banks, (2) to lend money to farmers co-operatives to protect farm prices and to home-owners in danger of foreclosure, (3) to set up the Reconstruction Finance Corporation "with a capital of two billions to uphold the credit structure of the Nation."

He stated that "we expanded the functions and powers of the Federal Reserve Banks that they might counteract the stupendous shrinkage of credit due to fear, to hoarding and to foreign withdrawals."

He pointed out how, parallel with his expansion of the extraordinary expenditures of the government, he was seeking to retrench on the normal expenditures and to increase taxes to balance them.

Finally, he announced that "I am to-day organizing the private and financial resources of the country to coöperate effectively with the vast governmental instrumentalities which we have set in motion."

When Mr. Hoover declared that "these programmes" were "unparalleled in the history of depressions in our country and in any time," he had perhaps overlooked a few other countries, but his claim was quite correct when confined to the United States. His programme was unparalleled. But what interests us about it is that it lays down the fundamentally new principle that it is "the function of the federal government in these times to use its reserve powers and its strength" to regulate the business cycle, and that in

applying this general principle Mr. Hoover formulated a programme which contains all the more specific principles of Mr. Roosevelt's recovery programme.

Let us fix in mind the working principles of Mr. Hoover's recovery programme:

(1) To counteract deflation by a deliberate policy of inflating the base of credit.

(2) To draw upon the government credit in order to supplement the deficiency of private credit.

(3) To reduce the normal expenses of government but to incur extraordinary expenditures covered not by taxation but by deficit financing.

(4) To expand public works in order to create employment.

(5) To have the federal government assume the ultimate responsibility for relief of destitution where local or private resources are inadequate.

(6) To reduce the hours of labor while maintaining wage rates.

(7) To peg farm prices and encourage farmers to organize to curtail production.

(8) To organize industry with a view to adopting common policies in respect to wages, hours, prices, and capital investment.

Apart from the Roosevelt measures of reform, which we shall have to examine later, all the main features of the Roosevelt programme were anticipated by Mr. Hoover.

The only important difference between the monetary policies of the two Administrations is that Mr. Hoover attempted to regulate the internal value of the dollar whereas Mr. Roosevelt is attempting to regulate its external value as well. Mr. Hoover was just as eager as Mr. Roosevelt has been to bring about a rise in the wholesale prices of staple commodities, particularly the politically sensitive farm products and raw materials whose prices are fixed by international competition. He was just as eager to stop the general deflation and to bring about a reflation. Nor did he hesitate to use monetary measures, sometimes called "currency tinkering."

The measures he used consisted in expanding the base of credit by open-market operations in the Federal Reserve system and in lowering the discount rates. This was the policy of the President, of the Treasury, and of his appointees on the Federal Reserve Board. It was carried out in spite of some opposition from some of the Federal Reserve Banks, and though the government's right to regulate the volume of credit was not formally avowed, as it is in Governor Eccles's banking bill, the power was, in fact, exercised.

Mr. Roosevelt has continued this policy. He has supplemented it by

measures designed to regulate the international value of the dollar in terms of gold, silver, and the foreign exchanges. But the major premise, which was that the regulation of the purchasing power of money is a function of government and is not automatic, was accepted and acted upon by the Hoover Administration. However great may be the differences of opinion as to how the purchasing power of money should be regulated, however much men may disagree as to who shall exercise the power to regulate, it would therefore seem reasonable to assume that the effort to manage the purchasing power of money will continue to be a function of government.

Legally it has, of course, always been a function of government, and ever since the war we have had a managed monetary system. Neither Mr. Hoover nor Mr. Roosevelt invented a managed currency. Yet they have changed the conception of what the object of management should be. It had previously been assumed though not with entire consistency, that the dominant purpose of management should be to keep the currency stable in terms of gold. Mr. Hoover did that though he wished at the same time to regulate the currency in terms of its purchasing power. When the value of gold changed violently between 1929 and 1933, he was caught on the horns of a dilemma. If he regulated the currency to maintain a stable gold content he had a currency which was catastrophically unstable in its purchasing power. Mr. Roosevelt resolved the difficulty in 1933 by abandoning stability in terms of gold in order to achieve control in terms of purchasing power. But in 1934 he returned to stability in terms of gold, and ever since the American price level has once more been under the disturbing influence of the instability of gold itself. The effort to manage the value of gold by manipulating the value of silver followed. It is too early to judge the experiment when this is written. Whether it fails or succeeds, whether the outcome is a new international gold standard, or bimetallism, or a second abandonment of the gold standard, is outside this discussion. The idea that it is a function of public authority to regulate the purchasing power of money is not likely to be abandoned, whatever may be the fate of the particular measures now used to regulate it.

The use of the national credit to support and to supplement local and private credit is not, strictly speaking, a radically new innovation. It was practised during the World War and in the first post-war depression. President Hoover adopted the policy on a grand scale when he created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and various farm credit agencies. Mr. Roosevelt has continued the policy and has extended it. A substantial part of the deficits incurred in both Administrations is due not to the expenses of government but to this banking operation. Neither President has believed that the money borrowed by the government for this banking operation

should be balanced by taxes. Both have acted on the principle that this banking operation should be supported by deficit financing. It is reasonable to suppose that this principle will become orthodox and that in future emergencies government borrowing will be resorted to when private credit is deficient.

The questionable element of the Roosevelt budgetary programme is in that part of the deficit which is being deliberately incurred in irrecoverable expenditures — for relief and for public works that are not “self-liquidating.” Mr. Hoover had deficits of this sort. But he had a bad conscience about them, whereas Mr. Roosevelt has seemed to look upon them as preferable in principle to the deflationary effect of greatly increased taxes or of drastic retrenchment. But while Mr. Hoover was not in favor of deficits to finance public works, he was, of course, an early and conspicuous promoter of the idea that government enterprises should be expanded when private enterprises contract. He formulated the principle during the depression of 1921, acted upon it in 1930, and pointed to it with pride in 1932. Mr. Hoover believed in the principle of “pump-priming.” In actual fact, he financed his pump-priming with deficits just as Mr. Roosevelt has done. In theory, he would presumably have preferred to finance them by taxes in order to keep the budget in balance, and presumably he would today prefer to give up the pump-priming in order to balance the budget.

In their relations to agriculture and to industry there is no sharp break between the two Administrations. Both have recognized that the agricultural staples have unsheltered prices whereas most manufactured goods have sheltered prices, and that this produces a disparity which it is a function of government to correct. The superior position of industry lies in the fact that it can benefit by the tariff, that much of it is under a centralized control in which prices can be maintained by regulating the supply through curtailment of production. The agricultural staples, on the other hand, cannot without special devices take advantage of tariffs, and the farmers are the most highly individualistic and competitive of all producers. President Hoover made many attempts to remedy this disparity. He increased the tariff on farm products. He used government money in an effort to control the supply offered in the markets. He advised the farmers to curtail production, and he contemplated the government rental or purchase of marginal lands in order permanently to reduce production. The Roosevelt agricultural policy has followed those same principles. It has used government money to regulate the supply offered for sale. It has supplemented Mr. Hoover's advice to curtail production by levying a tax to pay farmers who follow the advice, and it is withdrawing marginal lands permanently. Both Presidents recognized that a satisfactory domestic solution of the farm prob-

lem is very unlikely; both have wanted to see a revival of foreign markets; neither was able or willing to expand agricultural exports by reducing the tariff on industrial goods.

As regards their relations to industry, if we strip the N.R.A. of its ballyhoo, of the more or less unenforceable and unenforced labor provisions, we find the trade associations (which Mr. Hoover did so much to promote as Secretary of Commerce) freed of the menace of the anti-trust laws (which Mr. Hoover as President did so little to enforce). The N.R.A. extended the principle of organization to industries and trades that had not been organized previously. It tightened up the organization all along the line. It made price-fixing and production control and marketing quotas more general, more effective, more respectable. But in embryo, in all its essential features, the substance of N.R.A. existed before the Blue Eagle was hatched. The National Industry Recovery Act was little more than the substitution of legal for companionate marriages in the realm of private monopoly.

Even the wage policy of N.R.A. was a continuation of a policy inaugurated by Mr. Hoover in the autumn of 1929 and maintained by him throughout his term. It consisted in the preservation of the rate of wages regardless of the income received by the wage-earner. Mr. Hoover threw the whole weight of his influence against reduction in the rate of wages, as Mr. Roosevelt did in 1933 and until very recent times. He believed what the labor leaders believed, what the N.R.A. economists believed, what Mr. Roosevelt in his first year believed, that the purchasing power of labor could be maintained by a high hourly rate. That the high hourly rate in the face of falling prices was a sure way to increase and perpetuate unemployment was denied in both Administrations, though I suspect that neither Mr. Hoover nor Mr. Roosevelt would deny it to-day.

In rough fashion, this covers the ground usually marked out as the recovery programme. I do not see how one can fail to conclude that in all essential matters of policy — monetary management, the budget, the agricultural disparity, and industrial "stabilization" — there has been no break in principle, and that the Roosevelt measures are a continuous evolution of the Hoover measures.

What about the reforms? In one sense the most radical of all the reforms are these very recovery measures themselves: the acceptance by the government of responsibility for recovery, and the corollaries of that — the resort to monetary management, the use of government credit, the expansion of government enterprise, and the organization of agriculture and of industry under government auspices for the control of production and of supply in the markets. These mark great changes in a political system which until 1929 was committed to the general doctrine of *laissez faire*.

The measures which are specifically called the "reforms" are distinguished from the others by the fact that, except as a response to the challenge of popular discontent, they were not dictated by the emergency and might have been imposed later and in more leisurely fashion. But it is clear, I think, that though the reforms might have been delayed, and though they might have been different in detail, their essential principles are derived directly and inevitably from the fundamental assumption of the whole period since 1929, that we have a national economy and not a mere aggregation of individual enterprises.

The reforms extend into new fields: the regulation of private enterprises, on the one hand, and the expansion of government enterprises, on the other. Some of the new regulation is merely the logical development of well-established principles. The clearest example in this category is the legislation as to busses and trucks and other common carriers in order to bring about parity of competitive conditions with the railroads. Another example in the same category is the proposal to bring gas and electricity under more complete regulation. These reforms involve no new principles, and the fundamental questions they raise are not novel and are not radical.

In the present Administration we come soon, however, to regulations which are novel and radical. In the Securities Act and in the Stock Exchange Act and in certain parts of the Banking Act of 1933, the orbit of public authority is enlarged. In substance, these reforms lay down the principle that corporations financed by public subscription are publicly accountable. They require a disclosure, particularly of the whole process of capital investment, which is intended to take from private management much of its former privacy. The underlying theory of the legislation is that when the ownership of corporations is widely diffused, when corporations are financed out of the savings of large masses of people, it is an anomaly that those who control and manage them but do not own them should have the kind of privacy in their corporate conduct which men have in their genuinely personal affairs and in the handling of truly personal property. The legislation in these three Acts is not socialism. It does not substitute government ownership or government management for private ownership and management. It lays down the rule that private management shall operate in the public view in order to make it accountable to the great mass of its owners, its creditors, its customers, and its employees.

The officers of corporations are in effect required to submit to the same standards which they would have to meet if they were public officials. The doctrine that public office is a public trust is supplemented by the doctrine that corporate office is a public trust. From this doctrine there follow inevitably the prohibitions in the new laws against being on both sides of a

transaction. Just as a public official may not have a private interest in a contract with the government, so under the new laws bankers may not sell to their depositors securities which they have issued; utility holding companies may not sell services at their own price to operating companies they control; it is made hard for the officers and directors of corporations to use their special knowledge for their private advantage, and they are required to disclose their private interests in the corporations they manage.

That this development of public policy is the logical consequence of the corporate form of industry seems plain. It might have come more slowly had the public not suffered such losses after 1929, and if there had not been so many flagrant examples of the abuse of positions of trust. But once so important a part of the property of the nation became organized in large corporations, it was only a question of when and of how they would be recognized as being public institutions in all their essential relations.

The transition to this new conception of policy might possibly have been delayed a few years had the accidents of politics brought a conservative rather than a progressive Administration into power in 1933. The impulses of reform generated in the upheaval of the Nineties were held back for a few years by the reaction against Bryanism and the distraction of the Spanish War. They became effective about 1902 and were not exhausted until the World War introduced a new diversion of the national energy. The reforms of Theodore Roosevelt and of Woodrow Wilson brought under some regulation large areas of private enterprise: the railroads, the central banking function, the public domain and natural resources, foods and drugs. These present reforms extend to private finance, generally, and to the capital market, the underlying assumptions which were applied to railroads and central banking in the preceding era of reforms.

In addition to this extension of the regulatory functions of government, there has been an extension of government enterprise. A part of it is simply a development of the conservation movement. Reforestation, measures against soil erosion, the protection of water courses are not new in principle: it has long been recognized that there were certain kinds of capital investment which, because they could not be profitable to private enterprise, had to be undertaken collectively. Mr. Roosevelt has, however, made a departure in at least two important directions. The first is represented by the Tennessee Valley Authority; here collective enterprise has been deliberately undertaken for the purpose of making a competitive demonstration against the electric utility companies. The second is the social insurance programme: here the federal government enters a field heretofore left to individual or local action.

It would be an exaggeration to say that either of these Roosevelt reforms

represents a clean break with the past. No other President, it is true, ever sought to regulate electric utilities by forcing them to face the competition of government-owned utilities. But other Presidents have sought to regulate railroad rates by building canals, and President Hoover himself promoted the St. Lawrence Seaway as a competitor with the railroads. As for social insurance, while it represents a new function of the federal government, it is not a new function in state government, and Republican leaders, including Mr. Hoover, have endorsed it in principle.

We must conclude, I think, that however startling they may have seemed, however inadvisable or inexpedient it may have been to impose them at this time, the Roosevelt reforms are far less novel or radical in their implications than is the recovery programme which Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt have both followed. To regulate large corporations and high finance, to extend government enterprise into fields unoccupied by private enterprise, to use government enterprise as a threat to compel private monopoly to reduce its rates, to insure the weaker members of the community by collective action — none of these things is new in principle. They are all the continuation of a movement in American politics which goes back at least fifty years, and there is little if anything in the New Deal reforms which was not implicit in the New Nationalism of Theodore Roosevelt or the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson.

The recovery programme, on the other hand, is new and is radical. For here we have an assumption of responsibility for the operation of the whole national economy and the conviction that all the reserve power of government and all the resources it can command may and must be used to defend the standard of life of the people "against forces beyond their control."

This represents a far more radical change in the conception of government in America than is to be found in any of the reforms. For if it is now the responsibility of the government to protect the people against the consequences of depression, then inevitably the government must regulate the prosperity which precedes depression and produces it. If government is responsible for the downward phase of the business cycle, it has a responsibility in the whole business cycle. If it is fitting and necessary to manage the currency, the national credit, budgetary expenditures, and the like to counteract deflation, then it is fitting and necessary that they may be managed to counteract inflation.

It would seem that the decision which Mr. Hoover took in the autumn of 1929 is irreversible: he committed the government to the new function of using all its powers to regulate the business cycle. With this precedent established it is almost inconceivable that any of his successors should in another depression refuse to act. The knowledge that the government will

have to act to offset depression compels it to act to prevent depression. Because Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt have regulated a slump, their successors will also have to regulate a boom. The business cycle has been placed within the orbit of government, and for *laissez faire* and individual adjustment and liquidation there has been substituted conscious management by the political state.

It is perhaps possible to go further and indicate why it is that this very great new duty has been imposed upon the state. The recovery programme since 1929 has rested on the basic assumption that the "fixed costs" in a modern economy are rigid: that debts, contracts, wage rates, taxes cannot be reduced quickly or easily or sufficiently to liquidate the depression. Part of the recovery programme under both Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt has in fact been a defense of rigid wage rates and debts. The classic remedy, the only remedy known to *laissez faire*, is therefore impracticable. But if "fixed costs" are rigid, then flexibility must develop somewhere else in the economy if there is not to be complete paralysis followed by a social collapse. The flexibility to compensate for the rigidity of "fixed costs" has been found in the currency, in the national budget, and in public expenditure.

Unless one is to suppose that the proportion of fixed debt in the modern economy will be drastically reduced, that long-term contracts and rentals will become easily amended, that salaries, wages, and pensions will become easily adjustable, we may take it as certain that we shall not return to *laissez faire* in the business cycle. If we do not return to it, then the management of money and the use of the national credit to expand and to contract government expenditures must be regarded as permanently new functions of the American government.

No one will imagine that I am saying that the particular devices employed by Mr. Hoover or Mr. Roosevelt were well conceived or effectively administered. To judge them, they would have to be examined on their merits. But I am saying that when we examine them, we are compelled to judge them on the presumption that, because our economy has become too rigid to readjust itself by individual action, it will henceforth be a normal function of government to attempt to regulate the business cycle. We have come on to a new plateau from which it is not likely that we shall easily descend. On this plateau the issues of the near future will be fought out, and there it will be determined whether a system of private enterprise, which has lost much of its power to adjust itself, can be preserved in working equilibrium by the compensatory action of the state.

PRAGMATISM, IDEALISM, AND AMERICAN POLITICS

To focus upon the similarities between Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt — who are commonly viewed as polar opposites — is not to deny that there were important differences or to fall in with that school of historiography of which John Higham writes in the concluding article in this volume. The differences in the background, beliefs, milieu, and political connections of the two Presidents may help to explain why Roosevelt was able to go beyond his predecessor's approaches in dealing with the depression, but they are of little help in explaining why he went only so far and no further. Why, for instance, he did not take advantage of the early bleak days of his administration to nationalize the banks and other segments of industry, notably the coal mines, whose operators were more than amenable to government ownership at that time; why his initial approach to industry was the National Recovery Administration, which mirrored the trade-association pattern that industry had itself adopted in the free-wheeling days of the previous decade and which favored larger, more powerful business interests; why he never embarked upon a truly Keynesian spending program; why he adopted the kind of cautious, economically regressive social security program his administration finally came out for in 1935; why he was always so fearful of direct relief; why he had to be forced into enacting labor legislation; why his first instinct frequently was to turn to programs of cooperative, voluntary action rather than planned, centralized, federal direction.

Certainly, the answers to such questions should be searched for in the objective political situation that Roosevelt faced, but further elucidation may be found in a study of the points at which the beliefs, aspirations, and environments of Roosevelt and Hoover conjoined. For Roosevelt no less than his predecessor believed in such things as the maintenance of capitalistic enterprise, the importance of individualism, the morality of fiscal orthodoxy, and the dangers of a hypercentralized federal government. If Herbert Hoover has too often been pictured as a totally rigid, do-nothing President, our image of Franklin Roosevelt suffers from the opposite extreme: he has too easily been labeled a pragmatist — a free-and-easy exponent of anything that would work. It is convenient to label Roosevelt a master politician who learned early that politics "is the art of the possible," but one wonders just how accurate that label is. What a man *thinks* is possible often reflects his

general orientation. In the fluid, confused period of Roosevelt's first administration, many things were *possible*, but for the President they were not all *desirable*.

Roosevelt has been characterized as a man who could say with Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom Roosevelt so loved to quote, "No facts are to me sacred, none are profane, I simply experiment, an endless seeker, with no past at my back." Roosevelt, of course, did have a past at his back and its roots were deeply embedded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With the reformers of that era, Roosevelt shared a deep sense of morality and responsibility, believed in progress, the goodness of mankind, the virtues of the rural way of life, the existence of a harmony of interests, the benefits of capitalistic enterprise, and feared too much government intervention and too vigorous a break with the past. If he was less rigidly bound to his past than was Hoover, nevertheless it affected him and shaped many of his actions.

In the following article, Rexford Guy Tugwell, who as Professor of Economics at Columbia University was one of the original members of Roosevelt's Brain Trust and later served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture until he left the New Deal and re-entered the academic world, indicates some of the differences and similarities between Hoover and Roosevelt. The last section of Tugwell's article, in which he discusses the personal relations between the two men, has been deleted. Tugwell has recorded many of his other views of and insights into Roosevelt and the New Deal in his biography, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (Garden City, 1957), and in numerous articles. See, for instance, those in the June, 1948, December, 1948, September, 1950, June, 1951, September, 1951, March, 1952, and June, 1952 issues of the *Western Political Quarterly*.

J. M. Burns, in his excellent biography, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1956), makes a good argument for Roosevelt as pragmatist, whereas W. E. Leuchtenburg, in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York, 1963), the best one-volume synthesis of the era, is more skeptical of the validity of the pragmatist label. For a review article presenting recent views on this subject, see C. A. Chambers, "FDR, Pragmatist-Idealist: An Essay in Historiography," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LII (April 1961) 50-55.

The Protagonists: Roosevelt and Hoover

R. G. TUGWELL

It was impossible, as the campaign of 1932 progressed, not to spare a pang of sympathy for Herbert Hoover. We may have been furious with him at the beginning, representing as he did the smug immovability of reaction. But before the campaign was over he was more an object of pity than a respected antagonist. As the attack developed and replies were made, it dawned on many of us, to whom it had simply not occurred before, that Hoover was not an engineer at all in any factual sense, but a man of principle. It had been a mistake to think that a scientific training implied social realism. He genuinely considered that consent to the mild measures of reform proposed by his opponent was immoral. It was immoral because there was almost no distinction, in his mind, between federal relief for the unemployed, for instance, and Communism. At the very least the one was a commitment to the other. He was to be pitied because he suffered.

Ray Moley, returning from the pre-inaugural meeting in Washington between the President and the President-elect, spoke of the further immolation to be read in the President's face. "He seems to me close to death," he said. "He has the look of being done, but still of going on and on, driven by some damned duty." The duty was to minimize as far as he could the disaster to the nation involved in the Roosevelt accession. It had frightened him during the campaign; it had ravaged his spirit in the months which had followed; and he did indeed look, at the end, completely spent.

There was such consistency in all we knew about him, and it led so inevitably to tragedy, that even in the busyness of those days, and even though we had resented his stubborn reluctance to meet the issues they had raised, we were serious about the man and pitied him. It had not seemed likely at any time after 1930, when the Democrats had carried the interim election, that Hoover would survive politically in 1932. It had been apparent from the time of Franklin Roosevelt's nomination in July that he would win and that Hoover would lose. He had won; and Hoover had had to struggle with the inadequate weapons he allowed himself, and against the harassments of a partisan and hostile Congress, to stem descent into disaster, even while

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he prepared to hand over power to a successor he profoundly distrusted.

He had not succeeded in checking the deterioration; and when he heard that a Roosevelt envoy had been burrowing among the equivocal paragraphs of the 1917 Trading With the Enemy Act he said to Ogden Mills — so we heard: “Good God! They’re going off gold!” There was scandal and heart-break in the ejaculation. The permissive clauses had been brought to him — we found them underlined in red in the Treasury copy — and he had rejected the betraying alternative. As late as February he was rejoicing publicly: “Ever since the storm began in Europe the United States has held staunchly to the gold standard.”

“We have,” said Hoover, “maintained one Gibraltar of stability in the world.”

To us that may have seemed a curious view of the situation in February of that year. There was no Gibraltar of stability for all those unemployed and their families, all those home and farm owners who were being dispossessed, all those holders of insurance policies whose companies were insolvent; and there was none even for industrialists whose factories were closed. Presumably it was a Gibraltar for those who owned gold. But even the banks did not own enough. Within a month they would all be refusing payment to depositors.¹

It was, as a matter of fact, only five days after this breast-beating effusion that the famous long-hand letter to the President-elect was written. This letter began: “A most critical situation has arisen in the country of which I feel it is my duty to advise you confidentially. . . .” It went on to repeat his theory of the depression and recited the repeated “shocks.” We are, he said, “confronted with precisely the same phenomena we experienced late in 1931 and again in the spring of 1932.”

The trouble was, according to Hoover, a lack of confidence. This was what he had been fighting all along. First the Democratic Congress had frightened business, then Roosevelt had frightened it even worse. Now there was nothing more that he could do. But the alarm could still be quelled and recovery begun “if there could be prompt assurance that there will be no tampering or inflation of the currency; that the budget will be unquestionably balanced even if further taxation is necessary; that the government credit will be maintained by refusal to exhaust it in issue of securities.”²

¹ Address of 13 February at the Lincoln Day dinner of the National Republican Club. *State Papers of Herbert Hoover*, edited by William Starr Myers, New York, 1934.

² This letter, now preserved in the Roosevelt library at Hyde Park, is something of an historical curiosity, not only because it was hand-written and confidentially delivered in a great crisis, but because it was not answered, so that ten days later Hoover felt compelled to forego pride and, in spite of the apparent discourtesy he had suffered, address

This, we felt, was about as far as a human being ever went in sticking to his guns while the ship went down. There was the clear implication that the Republican policy was to be absolved of all blame for the depression. That holocaust had begun as the aftermath of war, it had continued because of "shocks from abroad," and heroic efforts to overcome it had been frustrated by irresponsible Democrats. It is to be supposed, from the earnestness of the February communications and their confidential tone, that Hoover did not suspect that dissent was possible. He thought that Roosevelt and his advisers, as reasoning people, must accept his analysis and join in the obvious measures for restoration.

Such obtuseness could only be owed to immersion in an ideology completely immune to events. The statement of the thesis had been made repeatedly during the campaign; it had been held to in the interval before inauguration; it was even elaborated afterward not only in Newton and Meyers' account of the Hoover stewardship³ but in the ex-President's own *Memoirs* twenty years later.⁴ Few men in all history can have played a Premier role in comparable circumstances and have kept their ideas so inviolate.

II

To read Hoover and the Hoover apologists it could not be inferred that there was another explanation of depression from which to move toward a program of recovery. But there was. It was stated, rather cautiously, but nevertheless unmistakably, in the early Roosevelt campaign speeches. It was, in fact, stated in the first of them, the acceptance:

In the years before 1929 we know that this country had completed a vast cycle of building and inflation; for ten years we expanded on the theory of repairing the wastes of the War, but actually expanding far beyond that, and also beyond our natural and normal growth. Now it is worth remembering, and the cold figures of finance prove it, that during that time there was little or no drop in the prices that the consumer had to pay, although these same figures proved that the cost of production fell very greatly; corporate profit resulting from this period was enormous; at the same time little of that profit was devoted

another letter to the incoming President, indicating that the situation had deteriorated further.

This last brought a reply and the explanation that the apparent discourtesy had been a secretary's oversight.

The incident of this letter and the surrounding circumstances are discussed at some length in Moley's *After Seven Years*, New York, 1937.

³ *The Hoover Administration*, New York, 1936.

⁴ *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression*, Macmillan, New York, 1952.

to the reduction of prices. The consumer was forgotten. Very little of it went into increased wages; the worker was forgotten. And by no means an adequate proportion was paid out in dividends — the stockholder was forgotten.

What was the result? Enormous corporate surpluses piled up — the most stupendous in history. Where, under the spell of delirious speculation, did those surpluses go? Let us talk economics that the figures prove and that we can understand. Why they went chiefly in two directions: first, into new and unnecessary plants which now stand stark and idle; and second, into the call money market of Wall Street, either directly by the corporations or indirectly through the banks. Those are the facts. Why blink at them?

Then came the crash. You know the story. Surpluses invested in unnecessary plants became idle. Men lost their jobs; purchasing power dried up; banks became frightened and started calling loans. Those who had money were afraid to part with it. Credit contracted. Industry stopped. Commerce declined, and unemployment mounted. And there we are today.

This, it will be seen, was a mechanistic, not a psychological, explanation of what had happened. It implied, consequently, that the remedies to be applied would need to be of the same sort. If there was a disparity between costs of production and the prices of goods, it would be necessary to force prices down. Only this would cure the stifling effect of this disparity. Price control by the federal government and some direction of investment were implied. If by this means corporate surpluses were reduced, they would neither be invested in unneeded plant nor flow into Wall Street to finance speculation. If all groups could buy the products of other groups and keep on buying them, continuous activity would have been established.

But there was another range of fact to be considered. And Roosevelt went on to consider it in the acceptance. It was one which loomed larger and larger as the campaign progressed. And it was more important in shaping the New Deal program than the analysis just cited. This was the dislocation of established relationships involved in the deflation of the depression years. This was not only a matter of the debts owed by individuals and groups to each other, but also a matter of exchangeability. It was reasoned by Roosevelt that panic had supervened when evidences of ownership had moved toward worthlessness. Debts contracted in dollars of low purchasing power could not be paid off in dollars of high purchasing power because debtors could not get enough of them.

It followed from this that if the value of dollars could be returned to the levels at which the debts had been contracted, debtors could get enough of them to satisfy their creditors. The incurring and discharging of debt — one of the central mechanisms of capitalism — could then go on freely. Reduc-

ing the value of the dollar was inflation. And the inference was that the new administration would resort to it in some fashion.

It was Hoover's contention that businessmen were frightened by both these inferences — that prices might be controlled, and that inflation might be resorted to. This declining confidence made it impossible for the measures he sought to take in 1932 and 1933 (before March) to have any effect. The Roosevelt idea of what the cure ought to be made it impossible for the Hoover cure to work.

In 1952 Hoover summarized the items of the cure he sought to apply as follows:

(a) to avoid the bank depositors' credit and credit panics which had so generally accompanied previous violent slumps; (b) to cushion slowly, by various devices, the inevitable liquidation of false values so as to prevent widespread bankruptcy and the losses of homes and productive power; (c) to give aid to agriculture; (d) to mitigate unemployment and to relieve those in actual distress; (e) to prevent industrial conflict and social disorder; (f) to preserve the financial strength of the United States government, our credit and our currency, as the economic Gibraltar of our earth — in other words, to assure that America should meet every foreign debt, and keep the dollar ringing true on every counter in the world; (g) to advance much-needed economic and social reforms as fast as could be, without such drastic action as would intensify the illness of an already sick nation; (h) to sustain the morale and courage of the people in order that their initiative should remain unimpaired, and to secure from the people themselves every effort for their own salvation; (i) to adhere rigidly to the Constitution and the fundamental liberties of the people.⁵

It should be noted that this summary was made in 1952 and so may possibly have exaggerated to some degree the promptness and energy with which the crisis was met. Certainly Hoover did "go into action within ten days" and it is true that he was "steadily organizing each week and month thereafter to meet the changing tides." It was this which wore him out by 1933. But that everything cited was done when it should have been done may be questioned as well as whether other measures were not called for even on his own premises.

But perhaps not. For it will be noticed that from (e) on, this list consists of qualifications. Many things suggested to him, or later said by Governor Roosevelt to have been necessary, were ruled out by considering carefully whether they might not result in the dollar ringing less true on some counters, whether they were reforms which were likely to intensify the national illness, whether morale and initiative might not suffer, or whether there

⁵ *Memoirs, op. cit.*, p. 32.

might be some doubt about constitutionality. These were, indeed, not the sort of thing to worry Roosevelt too much or at least to prevent him from acting when it seemed imperative, but they were for Hoover serious considerations.

What was suggested in the first part of the Hoover list was largely ruled out by the caveats in the last part.

Hoover returned to the debate of 1932 in his *Memoirs*;⁶ he still thought he had had the best of it but that an impatient democracy had preferred to follow after a siren voice. This was the harder to accept because he felt so virtuous about the whole thing. He had said, during the campaign, and italicised in the *Memoirs* the following, which is typical of many other such affirmations:

We have not feared boldly to adopt unprecedented measures to meet the unprecedented violence of the storm. But because we have kept ever before us these eternal principles of our nation, the American Government in its ideals is the same as it was when the people gave the Presidency into my trust. . . . We have resolutely rejected the temptation, under pressure of immediate events, to resort to those panaceas and short cuts which, even if temporarily successful, would ultimately undermine and weaken what has slowly been built and molded by experience and effort throughout these hundred and fifty years.⁷

This rather lofty moral position had been admittedly a vulnerable one in 1932. Winning the election would need something more. That Hoover recognized this, and yet refused to compromise, is a measure of his inflexibility, or, if that is preferred, his devotion to principle. He undoubtedly did recognize what was happening. And he did become indignant. When, on 25 October, the Governor said, with all the exaggeration allowable, certainly, in a campaign:

The crash came in October 1929. The President had at his disposal all the instrumentalities of government. . . . He did absolutely nothing. . . .

that was too much. Three days later Hoover burst out:

. . . It seems almost incredible that a man, a candidate for the Presidency, would broadcast such a violation of the truth. . . .

Yet, although his audiences were large, and there were known to be far more Republicans than Democrats, and although he felt he had resorted to every device allowable to him, and used them with energy and resourcefulness, he knew that he was losing. Only one event could save the election:

⁶ Vol. II, *The Great Depression*, Chapter 20 and those following.

⁷ Address in Washington, 11 August, *c.f. Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 256-7.

. . . Indeed our only hope of winning the campaign was a rapid economic upturn. Only that would carry complete conviction as to the rightness of our policies. . . .⁸

Hoover was certain that such a change was occurring. He was relieved. The depression was defeated and recovery was coming. It was discernible in July. The only question was whether there was time enough between July and November for public conviction to spread. However, says Hoover:

the upturn was halted by the Maine elections at the end of September which, in effect, went against us. The fears of the business world at Roosevelt's announced policies started a downward movement for the next six weeks which greatly nullified our hopes of mitigating the political influence of the depression.⁹

III

The exhaustion which had fixed the look of death on Hoover's face was gradually relieved when the pressures of responsibility were removed by the inauguration of his successor in March 1933. But the ex-President did not give up. He saw, and others gradually came to realize, that a debate had been begun which, if it should be abandoned to Roosevelt, would end in the complete discrediting of the Republican party. To an extent not realized in 1932, Hoover and Republicanism were inseparable. This had been unconsciously admitted when the movement to supplant him with another candidate had failed at the 1932 convention. It became more and more an open acknowledgement as subsequent years passed. Another candidate was turned to in 1936 — it was, after all, not necessary to carry *too far* such an acknowledgement. But Alfred Landon was a candidate after Hoover's own heart. And anyway, he was bound to lose. The Roosevelt charm had not yet been dissipated by the cold logic of the Republican argument.

But neither Hoover nor the Republicans gave up. The thesis that the depression was a Democratic creation was an article of faith no more to be abandoned than other articles in the list. If it had been, the other Republican commitments would have been undermined and might have had to be abandoned. For if Roosevelt had been right in 1932, business had brought on its own debacle and complete freedom of enterprise was no longer a tenable policy for the nation. There was hardly a Republican in the land who would not rather have seen the party buried than give up these principles.

The candidates might temporize as one campaign followed another —

⁸ *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 267.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

1940, 1944 and 1948 — and they continued to lose. But that Republicanism was the faith of business — that the two were identical — was basic fact. It kept the party alive and vigorous even in defeat. And when candidates wavered, and seemed to accept the New Deal, when even the platforms became equivocal on some doctrinal issues, the aging ex-President in the Waldorf Tower, growing more saturnine and even more fixed as he grew older, was always standing somewhere in the shadows to remind newcomers where their faith had to center. He appeared at successive conventions; he made speeches in each campaign; and in the interludes he made other speeches and issued statements. He was still carrying on the debate against Roosevelt.

Hoover was always convinced that he had not lost that argument even in the minds of those who had turned against him. Their defection could be accounted for in other ways. They had suffered too much. They preferred to try the easy and wicked way out rather than the honest but trying struggle outlined again and again by himself.

In 1952 he was still arguing. Only now, in his *Memoirs*, he had “final proof.” And in a campaign won on precisely the grounds he had said it had to be won on, Roosevelt’s defeat, and the defeat of all that Roosevelt had stood for, was accomplished. Now at last the country could be returned to the true faith. Liberty could supplant regimentation; business could be freed; the budget could be balanced, taxes lowered and the dollar redeemed. Moreover, the same policies as had been adhered to in the ’20’s could be returned to. They could, because it was not true what Roosevelt had said — that they had caused the depression. What had caused the depression — at least its later and more serious phases — was Democratic behavior which had resulted in loss of confidence. This had to be believed, a psychiatrist might have said, because a return to the Republicanism of the ’20’s would otherwise cause a new depression. Democratic responsibility not only had to be accepted, it was true. There was the good old Herbert Hoover, whose faith had never wavered, still proclaiming the proof that Roosevelt had lightly tossed aside. This was the proof in 1952:

- (1) That the Great Depression extended from 1929 to 1941;
- (2) That recovery from the Great Depression came quickly to other nations of free economy; but, as a consequence of the New Deal devices, it never came to the United States under Roosevelt during peace-time;
- (3) That the primary cause of this failure was the New Deal attempt to collectivize the American system of life;
- (4) That the Great Depression was ultimately in name ended only by war.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 471.

The proof was supported by figures, collated patiently over the years with engineering neatness; they showed conclusively that what Hoover had always said was fact. It had been a Democratic depression, and the Republicans had had it licked but the Democrats had interfered and prevented recovery until war had intervened and saved them. It was quite safe to go back to the Republicanism of the 1920's.

IV

There had been times when Hoover had seemed to stand almost alone, shouting occasionally from high up in the Waldorf, what men must believe. By 1952 he not only had the vindication of political victory — which he probably did not think any more conclusive than that of 1932 — but also he had the establishment, in perhaps the dominant intellectual majority, of the thesis he had stood out for. This *would* be conclusive. It had been taught by so many pundits, elaborated in so many courses of the Schools of Business, that it was by now quite casually repeated by radio commentators and by financial writers for the newspapers. And an acute observer might have noted, about the time the *Memoirs* saw the light, a new switch. There was a certain peevishness evident that some perverse intellectuals — a minority, of course — were still clinging to the Rooseveltian explanation. This might be expected of politicians; but to have the intellectuals still not right on this issue was downright dangerous. Heresy might spread, and anyone could see that if world events caused a new depression, a sudden resurgence of the Roosevelt contention might find wide acceptance again. If it did, and another Hoover should be defeated by another Roosevelt, it could be seen that a renewed New Deal might really carry out the program Roosevelt had only proclaimed but had never implemented.

For the alternative to Hoover's "proof" was the horrid suggestion that perhaps recovery had not occurred because actually there never had been any New Deal as Hoover defined it. That is to say, prices and investment had not been controlled and the resort to spending had never been sufficient. This would, it could be seen, account for the ending of the depression in 1941 and not before — 1941 brought ample spending as well as a certain regimentation.

It is even possible to argue that Roosevelt could not attain recovery because he operated within somewhat the same limitations as did Hoover. He believed in the same private and public virtues; he had concern for the national character; he thought liberty precious; and he was strongly attached to private enterprise. There was evidently involved a matter of degree rather than of kind. Hoover could see unemployment grow past ten mil-

lions, see Hooverilles proliferate, and know that human suffering beyond estimate was still growing — and still not be shaken in what he knew to be right. It was not that he was an indifferent or an insensitive man. Human suffering had for him an intense meaning. He had spent much of his life, as a matter of fact, in works of relief — even in Russia. It was simply that there were resorts which were not available. The federal government must do everything to help people to help themselves. It must do nothing to help them directly. Better suffer or even die — and certainly better suffer political defeat — than compromise this principle. So he haggled with the Democratic Congress about relief and about public works. The government might make loans to the states but not gifts to people. Public works must be self-liquidating. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation might support banks; it might not supplant the entrepreneur.

Thus Hoover. As Governor Roosevelt loomed on the political horizon, he appeared to be dangerously flexible in such matters. It was hard to say just why; and Hoover had some trouble during the campaign explaining his conviction that it was so, a trouble he would not have after 1934, when the dollar had been devalued, direct relief had been undertaken, and boondoggling had got under way. But during the campaign he had only the implication of regimentation and inflation to go on. And actually Governor Roosevelt's Pittsburgh speech made a great difficulty. That came in October, and to Hoover it must have seemed a blow below the belt. For in it Hoover was attacked for having presided over two years of federal deficits, thus weakening the dollar and destroying confidence, and for having countenanced the foreign loans now being repudiated. And the Governor had gone on to say:

. . . I shall approach the problem of carrying out the plain precept of our Party, which is to reduce the cost of current Federal Government operations by 25 per cent.

That speech would return to torment Mr. Roosevelt, but what is too often overlooked is the genuineness of the torment.¹¹ Those who worked with him were always aware of his longing for economy, a balanced budget, and a sound dollar. He claimed to have made the reduction promised in Pittsburgh "in current Federal Government operations." Even when expenditures for relief and works were being readied and made, federal salaries were being reduced, staffs were being cut, and federal operations generally stepped down. Lewis Douglas was chosen as Director of the Budget because

¹¹ There is an amusing passage in Judge Rosenman's *Working With Roosevelt* (p. 86-89) which refers to the commitment in the Pittsburgh speech. The frequent accusations that the President had broken his word rankled. When in 1936 another Pittsburgh speech had to be made he wanted it to be a vindication. After considering the matter Judge Rosenman gave up and told the President, "The only thing you can say about that 1932 speech is to deny categorically that you ever made it."

he had a fervor for economy matched by only two other contemporary statesmen — Senator Byrd and Representative Taber. And for more than a year Mr. Douglas and the President saw eye to eye in fiscal matters.

With what reluctance President Roosevelt was forced into deficit spending and how he resisted it at every step Herry Hopkins, Harold Ickes and numerous other New Deal administrators could testify. Estimates of need were always pared down; this project or that was taken off the list; for a long time every project was regularly cut from 10 to 25 per cent. And an earnest attempt was made to excise every research item from the budget with the lame excuse that this was the kind of thing universities ought to do.

As everyone knows, \$3,300,000,000 was appropriated during the Hundred Days for relief and public works. That may have seemed an astronomical sum to conservative citizens; but Senators Robert La Follette and Robert Wagner — who were the real experts in this matter after two years of duelling with Hoover — knew that a much more realistic sum would have been \$12,000,000,000. They were quite right, if what was wanted was what was professed to be wanted — the relief of unemployment. That, if nothing else, was proved when expenditures of that order began in preparation for war a few years later.

The New Deal expenditures were never enough to relieve unemployment and consequently to secure recovery. They therefore in the long run had to be far more than they would have had to be if the initial attack had been logically and courageously carried out. The reason it could not be, and the reason there was always wavering and insufficiency, was that President Roosevelt felt just as much convicted of sin when the budget was unbalanced as Hoover had been.

Then too, much of what was appropriated was not used in ways calculated to get the maximum effect. This again was for a moral reason Hoover must have approved. There were repeated and serious struggles within the administration, not always known about by outsiders, over this matter. There were those who contended that direct relief was cheaper, easier to administer, and quicker than public works, even those boondoggling projects of CWA and its successors. But the President was adamant. People must earn their livings; the government must get out of the relief business. It was a matter of morals.¹²

There was a similar struggle when it came to the shaping of the Social Security Act. There were many hot arguments as to whether the federal gov-

¹² It was because of a difference about this issue that Frank Walker left the administration during the first term. He believed economy more important than doubtful concern for the preservation of character. He also probably felt that the President was seriously inconsistent in not sticking to his professed principal concern for economy. Memorandum, Walker to F.D.R., 10 September 1935. Hyde Park papers.

ernment ought to make any contribution or whether the principle should be that a payroll tax should carry the whole load. The President, who was wholly persuaded of the regressive nature of sales taxes, was nevertheless determined that social insurance should actually be insurance — that is, paid for directly by those who were to receive the benefits, a deduction from, not an addition to, wages.

These illustrations are cited to show that if Hoover carried his principles too far, they were not different from the Roosevelt principles which on occasion were modified or attenuated. The long debate, Hoover vs. Roosevelt, is misconceived if it is thought to proceed from morals or orthodoxy on the one side against immorality or unorthodoxy on the other. If President Roosevelt unbalanced the budget, devalued the dollar and involved the federal government in the direction of enterprise, it was because these expedients were forced on him by depression and war. In resorting to them he was, in his own mind, doing wrong. And so he was sensitive to attack.

It is probable that President Roosevelt changed in many of these matters. There is reason to believe that he came to understand the theory of the compensated budget, as he did not in 1933, and to see that a Federal agency, presiding over the function of conjuncture, was necessary, as he had not in 1933.¹³

But in those early years he was far nearer to Hoover than either realized. But likenesses and differences, if less than is usually thought, are still significant.

v

President Roosevelt, as is well known, was the product of Hyde Park, Groton, Harvard, and Albany. What is not so well known is what it meant to be the product of those successive environments. It is true that he was free of financial worries and occupied a favored position in society. It is not true that this tended to make him careless of others' well-being and insensitive to their sufferings. He was taught a noblesse oblige at home which seemed as natural to his mother and father as the possession of the wealth which made it possible. And the Peabody influence at Groton deepened his acceptance of social responsibility. This has sometimes been lost sight of in the obvious but more superficial evidence that he was interested in sports and social affairs. Certainly he was. But note the following in Freidel's account:

¹³ That was the neglected function of NRA which now goes under the name of "countervailing powers." The theorists who contemplate the development of such a system — advocated by Mr. Lilienthal and at least explained by Professor Galbraith — will discover that the presiding will of government is necessary. NRA may well be reconstituted yet under a different name.

At this period (when he was sixteen) Franklin was developing considerable interest in religious and charitable work. He had attended the Rector's confirmation lectures, been one of a class confirmed by Bishop Lawrence. Later he was elected to the Missionary Society which conducted church services in small rural localities nearby, managed a summer camp for underprivileged boys, and contributed to the maintenance of a club for them in Boston.¹⁴

There is also the fact, sometimes also overlooked, that he had no outstanding success at Groton. He was a good deal humbler youth — also more sincere — than he was afterward given credit for having been. Peabody remarked about this that there had been a good deal written about Franklin when he was a boy at Groton and that "it was more than I should have thought justified by the impression he left at the school. . . ."¹⁵

Like most school-boy letters, Franklin's communications with those at home had to do with the exaggerated trivia of Groton events. It is impossible to read them, however, without gathering an impression of unusual warmth and concern that all his affairs should be shared by those he loved at home. This continued to be true at Harvard and was intensified by the death of his father, which left his mother so much alone.

Then there is — or perhaps there began, even before, at Groton — the slow, almost unconscious development, out of the warmth he felt toward his family and friends, a wider regard for the welfare of others which would one day blossom first as an interest in conservation and then as a concern for his less fortunate fellow citizens. This went on below a particularly deceptive surface and in spite of (or perhaps, in reaction, because of) many surrounding influences. The temptation was to use the family fortune and the assured social position as many of his contemporaries did. There were those who had known him as a young man who could never understand how he could be different from what they had supposed him to be. The appearance was that of a gilded youth without a thought in his head beyond dress, sports, social affairs and easy friendship.

By a strong instinct too he soon was led to show no more of his inner nature to his mother than to others. This was undoubtedly because he knew very well how opposed she would have been to the conclusions maturing in his mind. At any rate, neither she, to whom he seemed so close, nor others with whom he had intimate contacts, had any notion of what was going on. And the student of his life has, in fact, to infer far more than he would like about the spread of the roots which must have gone on over many years

¹⁴ *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship*, New York, 1952, p. 49. Cf. also *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, Early Years*, edited by Elliott Roosevelt, New York, 1947, p. 71.

¹⁵ Freidel, *op. cit.*, p. 50, and *Letters*.

without betraying the kind of tree his character and policy were to be. His philosophy begins to be plain in his Albany years, by 1910; but it can be seen in full maturity only later — after his trial in the ordeal of sickness and physical disaster.

There is some inclination to seize on the struggle for recovery from infantile paralysis as a transforming episode, and to credit those around him with a basic change as he fought back to mastery of himself. This is very likely, again, much too superficial. Eleanor Roosevelt and Louis Howe were devoted persons; and Eleanor, perhaps, ought rightly to be sainted. It was compensation indeed to have them by him through the years of struggle. But the inner convictions which made Franklin Roosevelt the instrument of his nation's return to health were his own. They were so sturdy and full fed, so ardently and with such artfulness fought for, that they can only have been the extension of his own nature, at last come to full ripeness through suffering, contemplation, and conviction, but not created by those experiences.

Walter Lippmann never in his life made a greater mistake than when he judged, in the spring of 1932, that the Governor of New York had no discernible qualification for the Presidency other than an obvious ambition. Beyond the political cleverness, which, like his personal charm, has misled so many, there was a conviction of appointment and a dedication to service which by a strong instinct Roosevelt concealed from everyone. There was, also, a deep religious faith which most contemporary commentators assumed to be no more than the nominal affiliation any politician would maintain. Then too the Episcopal church to which he belonged did not ask of its members an ostentatious piety. The Roosevelt religion was consistent with gaiety and intellectual freedom; but it was nevertheless deeply held. And if it required nothing else as a norm of conduct it insisted on good works. It was thus a reinforcement, or perhaps the source, of the noblesse so characteristic of the President throughout his life. How this could transform itself into a concern for human welfare which overrode any principle of government or any conception of business is not difficult to see. Nothing else was so important. Institutions were instrumental, and among them both government and business.

VI

Clues to the essential Hoover are to be found spread in a revealing profusion through the first volume of his *Memoirs*.¹⁶ In no other part of his accounting is there the revealing lift which the dullest memoir must show

¹⁶ Vol. I, *Years of Adventure*, New York, 1951.

at those moments when the pleasantest recollections are invoked. But real verve is to be found here. Even about this volume one reviewer — a British one — remarked that the justice of some of its strictures would be admitted by most readers, but that they would “be apt to resent the holier-than-thou tone or some of his unfluent, memorandum-like chapters. . . .”¹⁷ Most of his writing is memorandum-like. His state papers have that tone; that might be expected; but so, surprisingly, do his *Memoirs* — with the exception of the first half of *Years of Adventure*. In these chapters the recollection of hardships, risks, winnings and losses — the “adventure” of his title, overcomes the stodginess and constriction of his writing hand. It would be a miracle if it did not. Hoover had two decades, almost exactly, of such a life as few men lead but most men dream of; and he had not only the sharp joy of struggle in far places against nature and lesser men, but also the satisfaction of bringing about creative changes on a grand scale. Order was imposed on chaos everywhere he went because of his integrity, his single-mindedness, and his administrative genius. He rose from small things to great, from circumscribed responsibility to world-wide interests affecting men by the hundred thousand. And he savored every instant of those achieving decades.

Hoover not only led this kind of life, journeying now to China, now to Russia, and again to Africa or Malaya, from a center in London, he gradually created an organization which extended his administrative genius indefinitely. For the last decade of these years, young as he still was, he was the head and arbiter of a group whose sole occupation was to go where business emergencies had arisen and settle them. Lesser men were always biting off more than they could chew and ending up, perhaps after the most convulsive struggles with creditors and stockholders, in a net of troubles, which it was the function of Hoover and his men to loosen and remove. The business was set going again or it was decently interred. But what was done was the most that could be done in the circumstances.

Because the reputation for being able to do this kind of thing spreads, because the world is full of promoters and dupes, and because bankers cannot themselves untangle the webs their clients weave, the Hoover group was always in demand. The last time he ever asked for a job or sought a client, he says proudly, was when, at 21, the mine where he was working after he had graduated from Stanford closed down, and he asked a California mining engineer to take him on.¹⁸

That was in 1895. By 1914 Hoover had long since passed through a partnership with the famous London firm of Bewick, Moreing and Company,

¹⁷ *The Listener*, 5 February 1953, p. 233. This criticism applies most aptly to the later chapters which take him into public life.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* *Years of Adventure*, p. 27.

and had for eight years been a free lance engineer on his own with offices in New York, San Francisco, London, Petrograd, and Paris. And he had accumulated a fortune.

There is material, in the seventy-five pages of *Years of Adventure* devoted to this business career, for a dozen thrilling novels. Even though the most complicated and dangerous of the incidents related, say the story of the Cabinet mines in Siberia, the Boxer Rebellion in China, or the occurrences at Hsipaw in upper Burma, are told in a few paragraphs or a page or two, the obvious related circumstances left to the imagination have fascinating implications. The old gentleman in the Waldorf Tower has rich enough memories for a dozen declining ages. And it is this part of his life, the years of adventure, which made and fixed his mind and character.

He finished this period in 1914 when the First World War began. He became involved first in organizing the return of Americans from battle-swept Europe, then in Belgian relief — and from his beginning as Food Administrator in 1917, he did not leave public office until 1933 when he handed the reins to a successor he distrusted as profoundly as it was possible for one man to distrust another. For out of his experience he had generated an impatience and xenophobia which would never leave him. He had not only been an organizer of order, an emergency administrator, a rescuer of crooks and weaklings, he had generated a profound dislike for politicians, a scorn for bureaucrats, and a dislike for “foreigners.” He tended to trust engineers, especially the American variety, and almost no one else. He was impatient when lawyers and diplomats created tangles and he came very close to the conclusion that the world would be better off without them. It is impossible not to conclude, also, that he believed other peoples to be so inferior to Americans as not to be trusted with important matters. Certainly the United States, in his mind, was the repository of the elements from which progress in future must come.

All this happened in his mind in spite of his years of operating from London, his travels into all the strange places where minerals revealed themselves, his constant contacts with other peoples and his almost unvaried good fortune. He never thought of educating his sons abroad and underwent gladly severe inconveniences to establish them in the American environment. He never thought, either, of making them anything but engineers. And in this he succeeded as he succeeded in everything. There was, indeed, never a backward step, a check, a humiliation or a disappointment in his whole life until he came to the Presidency and fate played him the lowest trick she could reserve for a successful man. She had in store for him the revelation that the system in which he had operated with such unvarying success and which had raised him to its most powerful position was

fatally defective. It failed in his hands at the crucial moment of his career. He could not believe that it was true; and he would not believe it to the day of his death. Much of the rest of his life would be spent in tortuous processes of ratiocination intended to show — and to convince others — that the obvious was not fact. And he would not be alone. All the spokesmen for the undirected business system would be involved.

The Hoover *Memoirs*, after the first volume, are one long argument against President Roosevelt, centering in the causes of and the cures for the Great Depression. No violence is done, in an historical sense, if the two leaders are accepted as the protagonists of two violently contrasting viewpoints. If Hoover is right, Republican policies — the same in 1952 as in 1932 — are right. If Roosevelt is right, the Republicans will fail again, because they will not see, as Roosevelt came so reluctantly to see (even if the conviction was implemented so poorly), that an intelligent and democratic collectivism is the *sine qua non* of individualism and liberty, that it became so because of technology, that there is no return to the good old days without abolishing technology, and that failure to develop the instruments of collectivity will result in dreadful penalties — as they did in 1929.

The argument has gone on since 1932 with no cessation except for war. The campaign of 1952 was essentially the same in principle as that of 1932. In 1952 again, there were no great differences about foreign policy, and there was agreement about domestic policy to the extent, perhaps, of ninety per cent. The differences centered not in whether free enterprise should be encouraged but whether it should operate within a framework; not whether money should be “sound,” but whether soundness meant anchorage to gold; not whether the budget should be balanced but when it should be balanced. In 1932 Governor Roosevelt promised to be sounder, more economical and more reformist than Hoover. In 1952 General Eisenhower promised the same things if he were chosen over Governor Stevenson. The electorate, having two candidates to choose from, neither of whom offended their sense of principle, chose that one who promised to find ways in which principle could be made to comport with solution of the outstanding issue — in 1932 the depression, in 1952 the cold war.

It could not be said, after twenty years, that the electorate had chosen either theory of sustained prosperity — that which clung to ninety-six per cent free enterprise, or that which held that eighty-six per cent was a close enough approximation. The Republicans wanted only four per cent leeway: they would bring the government to the rescue of business institutions when disaster threatened. The Democrats would not only have a Reconstruction Finance Corporation but a Relief Administration.

Neither suggested what President Roosevelt had abandoned under Su-

preme Court displeasure in 1935 and never again espoused: an acceptance by the government of the responsibility for conjuncture. Hoover has gone on claiming that the Roosevelt position never shifted; the Democrats picture the Republicans as completely unsympathetic to labor, to consumers and common folk generally. The truth is that both have given way by some four per cent. To that extent the debate has become unrealistic, beside the point.

It ought to be noticed, however, that neither Roosevelt nor Hoover really gave up — they merely gave way. It was the fondest hope of President Roosevelt, nursed through one disappointment after another, that he could either transform the Democratic party into a progressive one or find the political resources to shape an alliance with disaffected Republicans.¹⁹

The original Roosevelt program in 1932 was drastically modified under pressure of orthodox progressivism; the same pressure perverted the administration of NRA and forced resort to inflation, both by devaluation and spending. These did not bring recovery; but that failure was masked by the greater inflation as war approached. The President knew that after the war new devices would be needed. He began to think again of the program of 1932; but then he died. His successor did not have to meet the problem because preparations for war began again almost at once and inflation again supervened.

Hoover was never reconciled. The Republicans gradually and reluctantly absorbed social security and other social minima but gave no ground on the enterprise front. In 1952 they won an election they chose to interpret as a businessman's victory. The car dealers, in Governor Stevenson's phrase, took over from the New Dealers. The issue still remained to be settled by events which for twenty years had refused a clear answer. The Roosevelt-Hoover debate was still going on. . . .

¹⁹ Cf. His declaration to me in 1932 that in eight years we might not any longer have a Democratic party but we would have a Progressive one. And the mission entrusted to Judge Rosenman in 1944 of beginning negotiations with Willkie for a new party, related in *Working With Roosevelt*.

AGRICULTURAL POLITICS IN F.D.R.'s "BROKER STATE"

It has frequently been argued that the New Deal set itself up as a "broker state," as a mediator between the often conflicting demands of the leading groups in American society. J. K. Galbraith, in his study *American Capitalism* (Boston, 1952), has maintained that from the 'thirties on, the United States has become a nation of "countervailing powers" working on and against one another, often through the auspices of the federal government, to achieve a rough kind of justice. It is certainly true that Franklin Roosevelt and most of his New Deal colleagues never really abandoned the Progressive Era's notion of a harmony of interests; a notion that eschewed all ideas of class conflict, that stoutly denied that the "legitimate" interests of one group might necessarily conflict with those of another, and that deemed it entirely appropriate that the federal government listen to the demands of all groups and help them to help themselves. Occasionally, minor surgery might have to be performed to eliminate or curb the small, selfish group of "malefactors of great wealth" — the "economic royalists" of Roosevelt's terminology — but overall justice could be achieved by simply balancing the needs of one group against those of another.

Many of the problems of the New Deal period and after arose from the difficulty of harmonizing a number of quite legitimate needs and demands of such antithetical groups as landed and landless farmers, skilled and unskilled workers, and large and small businessmen. Equally important was the problem posed by those who, lacking organization and a national voice, found themselves without either influence or power in the new "broker state." Toward the close of the domestic New Deal Professor Louis Hacker, in his study *American Problems of Today* (New York, 1939), charged that the New Deal was primarily the agent of the organized and relatively powerful. Up to the present, historians have paid relatively scant attention to groups that fell outside the area of New Deal reforms and benefited little, if at all, from the major labor and social-welfare legislation of the 'thirties.

One of the largest of these groups was the mass of depressed farmers, the migrant farm workers of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (New York, 1939), and the sharecroppers and tenant farmers of whom M. S. Venkataramani, who teaches American history at the Indian School of International Studies in New Delhi, writes in the following article. That many of these farmers were Negro raises the question of

how the unorganized Negro minority fared at the hands of the New Deal. Here too historians have been far too reticent. The article by A. Morrison, "The Secret Papers of FDR," *Negro Digest* (Jan. 1951) 3-13, barely scratches the surface and a great deal of research remains to be done.

The opposite side of the story, vis-à-vis the farmers, is told in G. McConnell, *The Decline of Agrarian Democracy* (Berkeley, 1959), which examines the most powerful and influential of the farm organizations, the American Farm Bureau Federation. During the New Deal, most Farm Bureau members were owner-operators who possessed twice as much land as did the average farm owner. This organization of large farmers, whose influence was most frequently felt in Washington, helped to shape many of the features of both Agricultural Adjustment Acts, and was largely responsible for destroying the Farm Security Administration, which despite its inadequacies was the final legislative hope for tenants and sharecroppers. The persisting plight of the latter groups today is an indication that if there is a system of "countervailing powers" in the United States, the unorganized and marginal social and economic groups remain on its periphery in the 'sixties as they did three decades before.

For other aspects of New Deal agricultural policy see P. L. Murphy, "The New Deal Agricultural Program and the Constitution," *Agricultural History*; G. S. Wehrwein, "An Appraisal of Resettlement," *Journal of Farm Economics*, XIX (1937); R. G. Tugwell, "The Resettlement Idea," *Agricultural History*, XXXIII (1959).

Norman Thomas, Arkansas Sharecroppers, and the Roosevelt Agricultural Policies, 1933-1937

M. S. VENKATARAMANI

The overwhelming victory of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 led many Americans engaged in agriculture to hope that a "New Deal" would soon be forthcoming for them. Three years of depression had greatly injured the farmer, as prices of agricultural products dropped to levels that had not been known for several decades. Nowhere was this agrarian distress more evident than among southern cotton producers. In July, 1932, cotton was selling at 5.1 cents a pound — the lowest price on record since 1897.¹ Land-

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¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Situation* (Washington), XVIII (August 1, 1933), 18.

owners in the cotton states found their incomes sharply reduced, and the specter of bankruptcy stared many in the face. Leaders of farm organizations and members of Congress, speaking principally on behalf of the land-owning interests, clamored for a program that would check the downward spiral of cotton prices. Asserting that the legitimate demands of those engaged in farming had long been neglected, they called for legislation that would insure "parity" for agriculture.

But landowners constituted only about one fourth of the population engaged in cotton farming in the South. Seventy-three per cent of the cotton farms in the United States, as classified in the census of 1930, were cultivated by tenants, and in the ten chief cotton-producing states there were 936,896 white and 670,665 Negro tenant families.² The most numerous and the least secure group among these tenants were the sharecroppers. The sharecropping system was a modification of the slave system of pre-Civil War days, and the Negro sharecropper was only a step removed from his previous status as a slave. Poor white farmers, too, had gradually been drawn into the system until, in time, they had become almost as numerous as Negroes. With little financial resources of their own, the sharecroppers were often heavily in debt to the landlord and were called upon to pay high rates of interest. The strict supervision exercised by the landlords over practically every phase of sharecropper life stultified initiative and enterprise. So meager were the financial returns from their labors that most of the sharecroppers had a standard of living that was "below any level of decency."³

The sharecroppers in the cotton states were thus among the most disadvantaged groups in American society and as such were least able to bear the added difficulties brought on by the depression. But because they had no organization to espouse their cause their political influence was negligible, and the early agricultural reform plans of the Roosevelt administration

² *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee* (Washington, 1937), Technical Supplement, p. 43, and Table I, p. 89. See also H. A. Turner, *A Graphic Summary of Farm Tenure*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 261 (Washington, 1936), 2. According to the Census Bureau classification, the holding of each tenant or cropper in a plantation is a farm.

³ *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee*, 7. For a description of the evolution of the sharecropping system, see Rupert B. Vance, *Human Geography of the South* (2nd ed., Chapel Hill, 1935), 186-90, 193-99, and Vance, *Farmers without Land* (New York, 1937), 12. Especially useful on the social and economic aspects of the life of sharecroppers are Charles S. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation* (Chicago, 1934); Charles S. Johnson, Edwin R. Embree, and Will W. Alexander, *The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy* (Chapel Hill, 1935); Thomas J. Woofter and others, *Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation* (Washington, 1936); and Arthur F. Raper and Ira DeA. Reid, *Sharecroppers All* (Chapel Hill, 1941). The most comprehensive bibliography on the subject of farm tenancy is U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, *Farm Tenancy in the United States, 1918-1936: A Selected List of References*, Agricultural Economic Bibliography No. 70 (Washington, 1937).

gave less attention to the needs of the tenants than to the interests of the landowners. Although Roosevelt, in his first major campaign address in 1932, had proclaimed himself the champion of the "forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid,"⁴ it was not especially to the sharecropper that his administration directed its attention. The main features of the program subsequently embodied in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 were agreed upon in a conference between Roosevelt's advisers and "farm leaders" representing principally landowning interests. Henry A. Wallace, who played an important role in the conference and who was later named secretary of agriculture, earnestly sought to insure that the farm legislation of the new administration would be in conformity with "the wishes of the farm leaders' conference."⁵

The main objective of the Agricultural Adjustment Act was to raise farm prices by curtailing production. The secretary of agriculture was authorized to enter into contracts with individual landlords under which the latter were to receive "benefit payments" for reducing their acreage of cultivation. The funds for financing the program were to be raised by means of "processing taxes." Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, who piloted the legislation through the Senate with great energy, reminded his colleagues that "as agriculture goes, so goes the nation";⁶ but neither he nor other spokesmen for the administration ventured to discuss publicly the manner in which the new program might affect the landless farmers of the South. Could any extensive program of acreage reduction be implemented without displacing tenants? Was it not essential to provide adequate safeguards to protect the tenants from eviction and to enable them to receive a fair share of the benefit payments? If the agricultural policy makers were concerned about those issues they gave little evidence of it in the "cotton contract" that they offered to the "farmers."

The contract proved to contain inadequate safeguards for the protection of the interests of non-landowning tenants. The tenant was not a party to the contract at all. It was left to the landlord to work out his own arrangements with his tenants. The contract merely contained an exhortation to the landlord to endeavor "in good faith to bring about the reduction of

⁴ Radio speech from Albany, New York, April 7, 1932, Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (13 vols., New York, 1938-1950), I, 627.

⁵ Henry A. Wallace, *New Frontiers* (New York, 1934), 164-65. Wallace regarded the AAA as "a new piece of social machinery." But George N. Peek who was named by President Roosevelt to head the agency was a conservative businessman who was opposed to "social experiments." For a description of the antecedents of the AAA and of Peek's views on agricultural policy see Gilbert C. Fite, *George N. Peek and the Fight for Farm Parity* (Norman, 1954), 253-55.

⁶ *New York Times*, April 12, 1932, pp. 1, 2.

acreage . . . in such manner as to cause the least possible amount of labor, economic and social disturbance." The landlord was further called upon to effect the acreage reduction "as nearly ratably as practicable" among tenants and "in so far as possible" to maintain on his farm "the normal number of tenants and other employees." Obviously, security of tenure was not guaranteed in clear and unambiguous terms to the tenants. An unscrupulous landlord stood to gain financially if he could succeed in getting rid of some of his tenants or in reducing them to the status of wage hands.⁷

While the contract itself was thus weighted in favor of the landlords, the position of the tenants was not helped by the manner in which the machinery of enforcement was organized. The responsibility for insuring compliance with the contract was intrusted to county production control committees. These agencies were hailed by Secretary Wallace and his lieutenants as an innovation of profound significance for democratic progress in the United States.⁸ In practice, however, the county committees in the South were dominated by the big landlords. Sharecroppers and tenants were seldom "elected" to serve on them, and small landowners fared no better.⁹ This meant that the provisions of the contract were often interpreted in terms favorable to the landlords. Since the committees were also charged with the responsibility of investigating complaints, the landless farmer found it difficult to obtain redress of his grievances. The county agricultural agent, who was the official representative of the Secretary of Agriculture, was generally regarded by landless farmers as the ally and mouthpiece of the big landlords.¹⁰

The inadequacies of the legislation and the hardships it entailed for sharecroppers were brought to public attention mainly through the efforts of the Socialist party leader, Norman Thomas. Initially, Thomas was not intimately acquainted with the day-to-day problems of southern farmers and the party he headed had no significant following in the rural areas of the South. He had frequently spoken on agrarian topics, however, and as the Socialist presidential candidate in 1928 and 1932 he had campaigned against absentee landlordism and had advocated co-operative farming.¹¹ When the

⁷ Henry I. Richards, *Cotton and the AAA* (Washington, 1936), 146. For the text of the contract see U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Adjustment: A Report of Administration of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, May, 1933, to February, 1934* (Washington, 1934), Appendix I, 331-32.

⁸ Wallace, *New Frontiers*, 30, 159, 195, 200-201. Rexford G. Tugwell, Under Secretary of Agriculture, stated that the committees furnished "the life-blood" of the AAA. *New York Times*, April 22, 1934, p. 30.

⁹ Richards, *Cotton and the AAA*, 78. See also Harold Hoffsommer, "The AAA and the Cropper," *Social Forces* (Chapel Hill), XIII (May, 1935), 494-502.

¹⁰ Gladys Baker, *The County Agent* (Chicago, 1939), 74-76, 212.

¹¹ For a detailed account of the Socialist presidential campaign in 1932, see M. S. Venkataramani, "Some Aspects of Life and Politics in the United States of America in

bill embodying the Agricultural Adjustment Administration program was being debated in Congress, Thomas criticized it on traditional Socialist lines and charged that "it will not cure any fundamental evil in capitalistic agriculture."¹² The Socialist leader's indignation was aroused when the Secretary of Agriculture ordered the "plowing under" of ten million acres of growing cotton and the slaughter of six million pigs as the first move to reduce "surpluses." Drawing attention to the tragic American phenomenon of "bread lines" in the midst of surpluses, Thomas declared that the government should have bought up the surpluses to relieve want and hunger at home and in famine-stricken countries abroad.¹³

Thomas soon discovered new and more disturbing ramifications of the New Deal's agricultural program. In November, 1933, he received a letter from Martha Johnson, a Socialist party organizer in Arkansas, asking him to visit the Arkansas town of Tyronza and see for himself the plight of sharecroppers. "Here you will find the true proletariat; here you will find inarticulate men moving irresistibly towards revolution and no less."¹⁴ Thomas was impressed by the earnestness of the appeal and the urgency of its tone. In February, 1934, he arrived in Tyronza and was shocked by what he saw and heard about the distress of the sharecroppers. In a well-attended public meeting he denounced the inequities of the system of land tenure and exhorted the sharecroppers to organize and fight for their legitimate rights. From that day onward Thomas carried on an unceasing campaign to arouse the conscience of his countrymen about the plight of their brothers in the cotton fields. In numerous speeches and articles he pleaded for action to save the sharecroppers — "the Forgotten Men of the New Deal."¹⁵

After his first-hand study of the situation in Arkansas, Thomas came to the conclusion that the operation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act had intensified the difficulties of the sharecroppers. He asserted that while the cash payments for crop reduction had gone to the landlords, the program had driven a large number of sharecropper families off the land or had reduced them to the position of casual day laborers. In a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, Thomas urged that action be taken to rem-

1932," *International Review of Social History* (Amsterdam), III (December, 1958), 361-84.

¹² *New Leader* (New York), XV (March 25, 1933), 16.

¹³ Norman Thomas, *The Choice before Us: Mankind at the Crossroads* (New York, 1934), 7. See also report of a speech by Thomas at Princeton University, *New York Times*, January 22, 1934, p. 5.

¹⁴ Martha Johnson to Norman Thomas, November 7, 1933, Norman Thomas Papers (Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library). Mrs. Johnson and her husband, Edward, were sent by the national office of the Socialist party to Arkansas in September, 1933, to help the struggling Socialist locals in the state.

¹⁵ See, for example, his draft of a speech delivered over the C.B.S. network, February 21, 1935, *ibid.*

edy the situation. "Has the Administration any plans for these sharecroppers other than pious hopes written into the contracts with landlords?" he asked. "What about the share-croppers driven from the land under any system of limitation?" "It is a social tragedy of the first magnitude," he insisted, "a tragedy that must be repaired, that we should be reducing a cotton crop when the men who raise it lack a decent supply of cotton for their families. The whole country ought to be aroused to the social significance of the situation."¹⁶

In his reply Wallace did not challenge Thomas' description of the plight of the sharecroppers. He asserted, however, that their "extremely low standard of living" had existed for a long time and was not due to the new crop reduction program. The program, the Secretary declared, called for a contract that contained terms designed to prevent the landowner from evicting his tenants. "We are determined to avoid injustice," he added, "and to correct it to the full extent of our power where it may arise."¹⁷

While Wallace did not choose to take any vigorous action to safeguard the rights of the landless tenants and sharecroppers, he was quite active in claiming credit for the benefits that his program had conferred on "farmers." In numerous speeches he voiced an assurance that if Jefferson were alive he would wholeheartedly support the AAA; and Edward A. O'Neal, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, expressed the sentiments of many landowners when he praised the program as "the Magna Charta of American Agriculture — its charter of freedom from the domination of predatory business interests, its guarantee of economic equality with other groups, its promise of a new day in American agriculture."¹⁸ Wallace's lieutenants were equally enthusiastic in their public appraisals of the performance of the agency. It was reported, however, that a group of "liberals" within the AAA, under the leadership of Jerome Frank, were pressing for some positive action to relieve the distress of the sharecroppers. Their "rebellion" was speedily and decisively quelled, and on the demand of Chester Davis, the AAA administrator, the dissidents themselves were dismissed from the agency in February, 1935. Although President Roosevelt made no move to save the liberals, he stated that he was very sorry over the episode and that he had "the highest respect for all parties concerned."¹⁹

¹⁶ Thomas to Henry A. Wallace, February 22, 1934, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Wallace to Thomas, March 8, 1934, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Quoted in Orville M. Kile, *The Farm Bureau through Three Decades* (Baltimore, 1948), 211. Some urban liberals were also impressed by the claims made on behalf of the program. See, for example, the comment that it was "the most brilliant success yet achieved by the Roosevelt administration," made in December, 1934, by Allan Nevins in the course of a lecture at University College, London. *New York Times*, December 30, 1934, Sec. IV, p. 2.

¹⁹ Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the*

Thomas regarded Wallace and his associates as "high-minded and competent" men and conceded that partly as a result of their policies the prices of agricultural commodities, including cotton, had begun to rise. He felt, however, that they had failed to comprehend the gravity of human suffering in the cotton country.²⁰ He was reinforced in his conviction when he studied a report prepared by a group headed by Dr. William R. Amberson, professor of physiology at the University of Tennessee. The report stated that between 15 and 20 per cent of the sharecroppers had lost their employment as a result of the crop reduction program, adding that the contract prescribed by the government did not protect them from dismissal or exploitation as day laborers.²¹ Thomas wrote to Wallace again in May, 1934, urging him to eliminate the loopholes in the contract forms, provide representation to sharecroppers on county production control committees, and insure for them the right of organization.²² In his reply the Secretary reiterated his "serious concern" about the problem, but offered no assurance that the eviction of the sharecroppers would be stopped. He promised to strengthen the corps of investigators and to improve the system of enforcement, but added that it would be difficult to draw up a contract that would adequately protect the sharecropper's interests.²³

Wallace did not lack information from his own sources regarding the position of the sharecroppers.²⁴ In January, 1935, Mrs. Mary Conner Myers, an attorney for the AAA, visited Arkansas and investigated complaints relating to the eviction of sharecroppers, but the Department of Agriculture did not release her report for publication. Dr. Calvin B. Hoover of Duke University, who conducted another investigation at the instance of Secretary Wallace, reported that the sharecropper had not shared equally with the landlord in the benefits of the AAA. The support of the landlords for the cotton contract, he said, had been secured "by an inducement obtained at

New Deal (Boston, 1958), 80. Schlesinger's account of the episode is based on his examination of the Department of Agriculture Papers as well as on other private papers and interviews. The present writer did not consult the Department of Agriculture Papers but examined carefully the extensive collection in the Widener Memorial Library, Harvard University, of press releases, statements, and other material put out by the Department. This material, while remarkable for its tone of self-praise, contains very little analysis of the problems of tenants.

²⁰ Thomas, *The Choice before Us*, 100.

²¹ *The Social and Economic Consequences of the Cotton Acreage Program* (Memphis, 1934). See also William R. Amberson, "The New Deal for Share-Croppers," *Nation* (New York), CXL (February 13, 1935), 185-87; Norman Thomas, "Victims of Change," *Current History* (New York), XLII (April, 1935), 36-41.

²² Thomas to Wallace, May 9, 1934, Thomas Papers.

²³ Wallace to Thomas, May 14, 1934, *ibid.*

²⁴ Wallace claimed credit for having set up suitable machinery for sounding farm opinion. Wallace, *New Frontiers*, 266-67. But since the machinery was based on the county production control associations, dominated by the big landlords, the point of view of the non-landowning farmer was perhaps not adequately conveyed to Washington.

the expense of the share-tenant and share cropper." Hoover asserted that the operation of the acreage reduction program "created a motive for reducing the number of tenants on farms" and added that the system of enforcement of the provisions of the contract did not adequately safeguard the rights of sharecroppers. "It is plainly the duty of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration . . . to spare no effort in preventing the unequal distribution of the advantages of the acreage reduction program, and particularly to prevent the operation of that program from making the situation of any class of producers worse," Hoover declared.²⁵ No concrete action was taken by the Department of Agriculture, however, to safeguard the interests of sharecroppers.

Convinced that the disadvantaged farmers could hope to win their legitimate rights only by banding together in a strong organization, Thomas lent vigorous support to a new union started with his encouragement by a small group of Arkansas Socialists. The leader of the group was H. L. Mitchell, state secretary of the Socialist party, and associated with him were J. R. Butler, Howard Kester, and E. B. McKinney. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, as it was called, came into existence in Poinsett County in eastern Arkansas, which Thomas had visited earlier. The most important "farmers" in the area were corporations which controlled huge plantations. The largest landowner was the Chapman and Dewey Lumber Company with a plantation of 17,000 acres. The Poinsett Lumber Company, a subsidiary of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, and E. Ritter and Company owned farms of about 5,000 acres each. There were also some big farms owned by local landlords, such as the Hiram Norcross Plantation which covered about 5,000 acres. The resident managers of the corporation-owned plantations and the big local landlords, who were leaders of the community, were greatly angered by the temerity of the Socialists in attempting to organize the sharecroppers; and small farmers and merchants among the whites resented the efforts of the union leaders to hold non-segregated meetings. Sharecroppers who joined the union were subjected to intimidation and threats of eviction.²⁶

While the local law enforcement authorities usually remained passive in the face of such activities, they sometimes swung into action on behalf of the landlords. Early in 1935, for example, Ward Rodgers, a young organizer for the union, was arrested at Marked Tree, in Poinsett County, on a charge of "anarchy" and was promptly sentenced to a fine of \$500 and imprison-

²⁵ *New York Times*, April 22, 1935, Sec. II, p. 7.

²⁶ H. L. Mitchell, "Organizing Southern Share-Croppers," *New Republic* (New York), LXXX (October 3, 1934), 217-18. For an account of the early history of the Union, see Howard Kester, *Revolt among the Sharecroppers* (New York, 1935), 55-56.

ment for six months.²⁷ Released on bail, he was soon arrested again in another community and thrown into jail on a charge of "barratry," which was defined as exciting or maintaining "suits or quarrels in the courts or elsewhere in the county" and disturbing the peace by spreading "false rumors and calumnies whereby discord and disquiet may grow among neighbors." The fact that this restriction — originally directed against shysters in the legal profession — was now being used to thwart the efforts to organize the tenant farmers brought a protest from the American Civil Liberties Union, along with assistance in the conduct of Rodgers' defense.²⁸

Meanwhile, landlords and local authorities sought to spread the impression that a serious "Red" menace had arisen in Arkansas, and a Memphis newspaper echoed their agitation by proclaiming in a big headline: "Red Flag Spreading, Prosecutor Charges."²⁹ In Marked Tree, where the tenants' union began to gain substantial support, the city fathers promulgated an ordinance making it unlawful for any person "to make or deliver a public speech on any street, alley, park or other place" without securing permission from the local authorities. The ordinance was invoked to prevent organizers, and even such visitors as Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union and Jennie Lee, the prominent British Socialist, from addressing meetings of sharecroppers.³⁰ "Of course the law don't mean that church people can't hold speakin', just the radicals, that's all," the mayor of Marked Tree told a visiting *New York Times* correspondent. "I'd give permission to most anybody to hold a street meeting so long as they haven't been mixed up with the union and ain't listed in that 'red network' book."³¹

Thomas, who had been striving to focus national attention on the developments in Arkansas, decided to make a tour of the area early in March, 1935. In many places he was told of evictions, intimidation, and violence; and in the little town of Birdsong armed intruders forcibly prevented him from addressing a meeting of sharecroppers.³² Elsewhere vigilante squads

²⁷ For a quotation from a speech that Rodgers made to a meeting of sharecroppers, see Richards, *Cotton and the AAA*, 149 n., and for his statement to a reporter, Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, January 31, 1935 (clipping in Thomas Papers).

²⁸ See American Civil Liberties Union, *Annual Reports* (New York), 1935-1936, 1936-1937, and 1937-1938, for accounts of the Union's work on behalf of the sharecroppers. Norman Thomas was a member of its board of directors.

²⁹ *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, January 31, 1935 (clipping in Thomas Papers). In a letter of protest to the editor of the newspaper, Thomas charged that hysteria was being deliberately aroused over the efforts of sharecroppers to organize themselves into a union. Thomas to Editor of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, February 1, 1935, Thomas Papers.

³⁰ H. L. Mitchell to Thomas, February 25, 1935, Archives of the Socialist Party (Manuscripts Division, Duke University Library, Durham).

³¹ *New York Times*, April 16, 1935, p. 18. See also Lucien Koch, "The War in Arkansas," *New Republic*, LXXXII (March 27, 1935), 182-84.

³² "Norman Thomas Visits the Cotton Fields," mimeographed release by the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, March, 1935, copy in Thomas Papers; "Norman Thomas

harassed members and supporters of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, and Mitchell and other leaders of the union were forced to go "underground" to escape vigilante punishment. On March 25 a band of about forty masked "night riders" fired upon the house of C. T. Carpenter, a respected citizen who had incurred the wrath of the extremists by serving as an attorney for the union. Five days later another group of armed men "mobbed a group of Negro men and women returning home from church, beating several of them with pistol butts and flashlights." A Negro church was fired upon in a neighboring community on the same night.³³ In order to prevent bloodshed Carpenter advised sharecroppers and organizers to obey the laws invoked by the landlords even though it meant a temporary cessation of the union's organizing drive. Thomas earnestly exhorted union leaders to strive to the best of their ability to avoid situations that might result in bloodshed.³⁴

The hard-pressed leaders of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union had other difficulties to contend with. A ruling by the Secretary of Agriculture and a decision of the Arkansas Supreme Court gravely affected the union's fight against arbitrary evictions. The union had contended that Section 7 of the cotton contract made it obligatory on the part of the landlords to maintain not only the same number of tenants but also the same tenants as at the time of the signing of the contract. The Secretary of Agriculture, however, supported the interpretation of landlords when he ruled in February, 1935, that the section "does not bind owners to keep the *same* tenants."³⁵ The union suffered another reverse when its petition for an injunction to restrain a landlord from evicting some tenants was rejected by the state supreme court on the ground that the tenants were not a party to the cotton contract.³⁶ The exhortations to the landlord contained in the cotton con-

Attacked in Arkansas," *Socialist Call* (New York), I (March 23, 1935), 1, 10; John Herling, "Field Notes from Arkansas," *Nation*, CXL (April 10, 1935), 419-20.

³³ The union issued a statement drawing attention to acts of violence against its members and supporters. "Acts of Tyranny and Terror Committed against Innocent Men, Women and Children of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in Northeast Arkansas," mimeographed, April, 1935, Thomas Papers. See also *New York Times*, April 16, 1935, p. 18; H. L. Mitchell and J. R. Butler, "The Cropper Learns His Fate," *Nation*, CXXI (September 18, 1935), 328-29; C. T. Carpenter, "King Cotton's Slaves: The Fate of the Share-Cropper Becomes a National Issue," *Scribner's Magazine* (New York), XCVIII (October, 1935), 193-99.

³⁴ Thomas to H. L. Mitchell and Howard Kester, April 5, 1935, Archives of the Socialist Party. Thomas suggested, however, that the union might acquire an armored car for protection against surprise attack on the road.

³⁵ Richards, *Cotton and the AAA*, 149. Richards states that there were differences of opinion over the issue within the AAA prior to its reorganization in 1935.

³⁶ *West et al. v. Norcross*, 190 Ark. 667 (1935); 80 Southwestern 2nd 67 (1935). For a discussion of regulations governing landlord-tenant relationships, see Albert H. Cotton, "Regulations of Farm Landlord-Tenant Relationships," *Law and Contemporary Problems* (Durham), IV (October, 1937), 508-38; A. B. Book, "A Note on the Legal Status of Share-Tenants and Share-Croppers in the South," *ibid.*, 539-45.

tract were thus shown to offer no real protection to the sharecroppers, and the situation in Arkansas at the time led a special correspondent of the *New York Times* to write:

For many of them [the sharecroppers] the "Three A's" have spelled unemployment, shrunken incomes and a lowered standard of living, if the hand-to-mouth existence they have led since the war between the States may be called living at all. . . . Attempts to better their lot through organization in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union have taught them that they have few rights under the laws of Arkansas and no more security under the New Deal than they have had in the past. Scores have been evicted or "run off the place" for union activity, and masked night riders have spread fear among union members, both white and Negro. In some communities the most fundamental rights of free speech and assemblage have been abridged.³⁷

At the instance of Thomas the national executive committee of the Socialist party, meeting in Buffalo in March, 1935, sent a telegram to President Roosevelt calling for an investigation of the "reign of terror" directed against the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in Arkansas; and when Secretary Wallace replied on behalf of the President that the situation was a difficult one for the federal government to step into, Thomas retorted: "A government that has interfered as extensively as yours has in the cotton economy of the South has a moral responsibility to act in view of the wholesale evictions I've seen with my own eyes."³⁸ Thomas also appealed to Under Secretary of Agriculture Rexford G. Tugwell, and to Chester Davis, AAA administrator, to use their good offices to bring about an open investigation. "I write earnestly," he wrote, "because I think it will only be a miracle that will prevent bloodshed . . . arising from the domineering arrogance of the planter class, unless public opinion and the federal government can take some sort of action."³⁹ Thomas went to Washington to present his case personally to representatives of the administration, but he soon became convinced that the officials of the Department of Agriculture, whatever their personal convictions in the matter, were restrained from taking vigorous action because of their fear of powerful southern senators.⁴⁰

³⁷ *New York Times*, April 15, 1935, p. 6. This quotation is from one of a series of news articles by F. Raymond Daniell, a reporter who made a special investigation of the situation in Arkansas in the spring of 1935. The *Times*, which had previously carried only brief reports of Thomas' charges about distress and injustice in the cotton fields, now commented editorially that the Daniell articles "constitute an interesting chapter in contemporary social history." *Ibid.*, April 16, 1935, p. 21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, March 24, 1935, p. 12.

³⁹ Thomas to Chester Davis, March 22, 1935; Thomas to Rexford G. Tugwell, March 28, 1935, Thomas Papers.

⁴⁰ Thomas to H. L. Mitchell and Howard Kester, April 5, 1935, Archives of the Socialist Party.

As a consequence he wrote to Felix Frankfurter of Harvard University, urging him to bring the matter to the attention of the President; but Frankfurter replied that he did not know anything about agriculture and that it would not be proper for him to raise the matter with Roosevelt.⁴¹

In a final effort to reach the President, Thomas wrote a personal letter to him, describing the happenings in the cotton belt and voicing his opinion that high officials of the Department of Agriculture were "frankly in fear of the powers of Southern Senators." Roosevelt replied promptly and courteously, but neither acknowledged the existence of conditions as Thomas had described them nor offered any promise of early action. The President said that an appraisal of the conditions that Thomas had outlined would have to be based on careful investigations and that such investigations were under way. Thomas then wrote again to the President, appealing for some action to safeguard at least the elementary civil liberties of the sharecroppers and to protect "above everything else" the right of tenants and sharecroppers to organize. "That," he said, "is the dynamic force on which we must depend for real progress."⁴²

Thomas also wrote to several United States senators, both Republicans and Democrats, urging them to give attention to the plight of the sharecroppers and to take steps to safeguard their civil liberties. He appealed especially to Senator Robert F. Wagner to extend the scope of his labor relations bill to include protection for agricultural workers. The condition of agricultural workers, Thomas wrote to Wagner, was worse than that of industrial workers, "A continuance of these conditions is preparing the way for a desperate revolt of virtual serfs," he added. "Unless the right to organize peacefully can be guaranteed we shall have a continuance of virtual slavery until the day of the revolt."⁴³ Wagner replied that agricultural workers had been excluded from the scope of his bill "only because I thought it would be better to pass the bill for the benefit of industrial workers than not to pass it at all." He was still convinced, he said, that the inclusion of agricultural workers was not desirable as it would lessen the likelihood of the bill's passage.⁴⁴ Not satisfied by Wagner's response, Thomas immediately sought the aid of organized labor. In a letter to William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, he warned that industrial labor could not afford to remain a passive spectator of the events in the cotton belt. "As long as there is a reservoir of white and colored workers as

⁴¹ Felix Frankfurter to Thomas, March 27, 1935, Thomas Papers.

⁴² Thomas to Roosevelt, April 9, 1935; Roosevelt to Thomas, April 22, 1935; Thomas to Roosevelt, April 23, 1935, *ibid.*

⁴³ Thomas to Leon Keyserling (Secretary to Senator Wagner), April 1, 1935; Thomas to Robert F. Wagner, April 3, 1935, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Wagner to Thomas, April 2, 1935, *ibid.*

badly exploited as these plantation workers," he declared, "the employers always have an advantage in the struggle with organized labor."⁴⁵ The AFL responded by adopting unanimously a resolution drawing attention to "the inhuman levels to which the workers employed in the cotton plantations had been reduced" and calling for a federal investigation of the condition of the workers.⁴⁶

Democratic leaders acted swiftly to counteract Thomas' campaign to publicize the disabilities of the sharecroppers. In a special article in the *New York Times*, Secretary Wallace voiced his disapproval of the bitterness aroused by "Communist and Socialist agitators" in the South.⁴⁷ Senator Robinson, apparently irked by the spotlight focused on Arkansas by the Socialist leader, tried to discredit Republicans by alleging that they were giving encouragement and financial assistance to radical propagandists. President Roosevelt, in an "unscheduled address" before what was described as a spontaneous demonstration of farmers, held in Washington in May, 1935, charged that men with "special axes to grind" were trying to mislead the people by "lying" about the farm program.⁴⁸

Administration tacticians apparently concluded, however, that the time had come for some action as proof of their solicitude for non-landowning farmers. "Respectable" groups as distinguished from Socialist "agitators" had begun to express misgivings concerning the plight of the sharecroppers. The Committee on Minority Groups in Economic Recovery, for instance, after more than a year's study of the problem, reported in March, 1935, that the southern tenant farmer was condemned to an economic and social life that was of a lower order than that of European peasants.⁴⁹ A number of articles about the hardships of the sharecroppers appeared in national magazines and northern newspapers.

The administration's response to such unfavorable publicity was twofold.

⁴⁵ Thomas to William Green, April 3, 1935, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifty-fifth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor* (Washington, 1935), 588.

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, March 31, 1935, Sec. VII, pp. 4, 21. The Secretary admitted that displacement of tenants had increased and that the operation of the cotton contracts had probably added to their difficulties.

⁴⁸ The object of the demonstration, according to its organizers, was "to counteract unfavorable impressions of the AAA which have been spread through the press by anti-administration propagandists." *Ibid.*, May 12, 1935, p. 9; May 15, pp. 1, 3. Edward F. Kennedy, secretary of the Farmers' Union, a national organization of small farmers, charged that county agents and minor officials had contributed funds to meet the expenses of persons who participated in the "trek" to Washington. Secretary Wallace denied the charge that the demonstration was inspired by the Department of Agriculture.

⁴⁹ *New York Times*, March 21, 1935, p. 25. The study was directed by Edwin R. Embree, president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, Will W. Alexander, director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, and Charles S. Johnson, Negro educator and head of the Department of Social Research at Fisk University. Their report was published as *The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy* (Chapel Hill, 1935).

On July 1, 1935, a new agency known as the Resettlement Administration was established to provide emergency relief to a selective group of farmers and to implement a long-range program for their rehabilitation.⁵⁰ The administration also announced its support of a farm tenancy bill sponsored in Congress by Senator John H. Bankhead of Alabama and Representative Marvin Jones of Texas. The bill called for the establishment of a federal agency to help selected tenants by providing long-term, low-interest loans for the purchase of farms. The agency, according to the bill, was to be capitalized at fifty million dollars and was to have potential authority to issue one billion dollars in bonds under government guarantee. Secretary Wallace hailed it as a "statesmanlike proposal" and pledged the full co-operation of the Department of Agriculture for the attainment of its objectives. The general philosophy of the Bankhead-Jones bill, said Wallace, was "going back to the old principles, intended but not realized in our early land policy, of trying to get the good farm land of America into the hands of owner operators who live on family-size farms."⁵¹

"Farms for the Tenants" was an attractive slogan that evoked images of sturdy and independent yeomen diligently tilling their own homesteads. Newspapers described the tenancy bill — without any contradiction from its sponsors and supporters — as designed "to rehabilitate approximately 10,000,000 share-croppers and tenant farmers, Negro and white."⁵² Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish social welfare groups promptly endorsed the bill and William Green, head of the American Federation of Labor, expressed his support.

Thomas, on the other hand, regarded the Bankhead-Jones bill as a totally inappropriate method for meeting the problems of the sharecroppers. "It is simply a gesture," he said, "by which the leading advocates of the Bill in the Administration would like to divert attention from some results of the AAA and in particular the enormous hypocrisy of Section 7 of the cotton contracts." In a memorandum to the Senate Committee on Agriculture he stated that the bill as it stood would principally benefit land speculators while imposing a burden on the general public, and that the subsidization of an American peasantry on subsistence farms would be a step of questionable value. The bill "should at least be amended to allow the government to encourage cotton cooperatives under expert management," he contended. "That is to say, whole plantations should be organized as units, socially

⁵⁰ The new agency functioned from July 1, 1935, to December 31, 1936. For an account of its work, see Clarence A. Wiley, "Settlement and Unsettlement in the Resettlement Administration Program," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, IV (October, 1937), 456-72.

⁵¹ *New York Times*, March 31, 1935, Sec. VII, pp. 4, 21; April 22, 1935, p. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, April 15, 1935, p. 6.

owned, with good working conditions and security of status for the present tenants who should be trained in cooperation.”⁵³

Nearly a year later the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union returned to the subject with a complaint that the bill's vague promise of homesteads for a few would not provide a solution of the problem of underprivileged groups in agriculture;⁵⁴ and within a few weeks a growing sentiment of protest against existing conditions flared into action. During May and June, 1936, approximately five thousand sharecroppers in Arkansas went on strike. Several cases of violence against strikers were reported, and many strikers were arrested on such charges as vagrancy, assault, and “interference with labor.”⁵⁵ But when President Roosevelt visited Little Rock on June 10 to participate in the celebration of the centennial of Arkansas' admission to statehood, he made no reference to the strike, despite the fact that Thomas had wired him that all Americans “who care for liberty and justice to workers” would anxiously wait to learn what the President would say concerning the disabilities of agricultural workers in Arkansas.⁵⁶

The story of the strike received widespread notice when two Socialists, Miss Willie Sue Blagden and the Reverend Claude Williams, were subjected to a whipping by unknown assailants near the town of Earle.⁵⁷ The incident aroused considerable indignation in other sections of the country, and Thomas called upon the President to take effective action to deal with the situation. When Roosevelt replied that he had asked the governor of Arkansas to appoint a committee of citizens to investigate the matter, Thomas and the leaders of the tenant farmers' union asserted that no satisfactory investigation could be expected under the sponsorship of the governor, who had “shown himself fully the representative and tool of the planter class.”⁵⁸ Their prediction was only partially confirmed when the report of the governor's committee, released in November, 1936, indorsed the objectives of the Bankhead-Jones bill and called for improved housing and

⁵³ Thomas to Senate Committee on Agriculture, May 1, 1935, Thomas Papers.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, March 29, 1936, p. 25.

⁵⁵ For an account of the strike see “The Cotton Croppers Strike in Arkansas,” Federal Council of Churches of Christ, *Information Service* (New York), XV (June, 1936).

⁵⁶ Roosevelt's speech is in Rosenman (ed.), *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, V, 195–202; and for Thomas' comments see *Socialist Call*, II (June 20, 1936), 1.

⁵⁷ For a brief contemporary account of the incident see “Farmers: ‘True Arkansas Hospitality,’” *Time* (New York), XXVII (June 29, 1936), 12. Some additional detail appears in Oren Stephens, “Revolt in the Delta: What Happened to the Sharecroppers' Union,” *Harper's Magazine* (New York), CLXXXIII (November, 1941), 658.

⁵⁸ Thomas wrote caustically that entrusting the governor of Arkansas with any responsibility for investigating the grievances of sharecroppers was like “asking Al Capone in his prime to investigate conditions in the underworld in Chicago.” Norman Thomas, *After the New Deal, What?* (New York, 1936), 50.

long-term leases for sharecroppers.⁵⁹ But in the meantime a federal grand jury which had been investigating charges brought by the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union concerning the existence of peonage in Arkansas indicted the city marshal of Earle on eight counts of violating federal antislavery laws, one of which was that he had broken up a procession of strikers, arrested thirteen, and forced them to work on his own farm.

With such indications that public interest in the problem of tenancy was becoming aroused, and with the presidential campaign of 1936 in progress, Roosevelt apparently deemed it appropriate to demonstrate his solicitude for the tenants. In identical letters he called upon Senator Bankhead and Representative Jones to be ready by December with "plans for meeting the tenancy problem that might be undertaken by the Federal Government." The Republican presidential candidate, Alfred M. Landon, also proclaimed his resolve to promote a program to encourage the acquisition of lands by tenants. Thomas, again the standard-bearer of the Socialist party, mocked this "sudden concern for the tenant farmers" manifested on election eve by the Republican and Democratic candidates.⁶⁰ Roosevelt, he said, had not shown a real interest in redressing the grievances of the laboring men of the South. "He seems more interested in the labor problems of Pennsylvania where he needs their votes, than in the South, where he does not need the votes of the laboring man," Thomas charged.⁶¹

Shortly after his re-election, Roosevelt appointed a special committee, with Wallace as chairman, to report on "a long-term program of action to alleviate the shortcomings of our farm tenancy system," and a representative of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, W. L. Blackstone, was named as one of the members of the committee. Wallace undertook a trip through sharecropper territory and later spoke about workers "at the bottom of the pile" who constituted a majority of the population engaged in agriculture. Although he had ruled in 1935 that Section 7 of the cotton contract did not obligate the landlord to keep the same tenants, he now declared that security of tenure for tenant farmers was as important as security for other workers. He adhered, however, to his earlier stand that the regulation of the landlord-tenant relationship was outside the scope of federal action and was a matter to be handled at the state level.⁶²

The Wallace committee submitted its report to President Roosevelt in February, 1937. It did not make a single criticism of federal agricultural policies or of the actions (or lack of them) of state governments. Neverthe-

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, November 20, 1936, p. 17.

⁶⁰ Speech at Waterloo, Iowa, *ibid.*, October 14, 1936, p. 11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, September 23, 1936, p. 16.

⁶² *Ibid.*, January 24, 1936, p. 2; November 23, 1936, p. 3; January 13, 1937, p. 13.

less, its moderately worded findings constituted an admission of many of the charges that Thomas and leaders of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union had leveled for over three years. One farm family out of every four "occupies a position in the Nation's social and economic structure that is precarious and should not be tolerated," the report said. Tenants, croppers, and farm laborers were the principal disadvantaged groups among farm families. The report added that the committee had "noted instances where disadvantaged groups in their attempts to organize and increase their bargaining power have been unlawfully prevented from exercising their civil liberties." It did not, however, seek to investigate them or to make any criticism of persons in a position of authority who had remained silent in the face of unlawful attacks on those engaged in lawful activities. The report also conceded, without attempting to apportion blame or responsibility, that the administration's agricultural policies had not provided security to the disadvantaged groups. "Croppers, who generally supply only their labor," it said, "are usually the most insecure group of tenants. Even the slender protection of the cropper contract has recently become less effective, as conditions have impelled landlords to convert many croppers into laborers, dependent on casual employment for wages."⁶³

But the committee did not follow up its analysis with a demand for the elimination of the abuses in the landlord-tenant relationship. It held that while the federal government could do much to improve the conditions of tenant farmers "some of the most fruitful fields of endeavor are under the

⁶³ *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee*, 4, 7. While the report confirmed the contention of Thomas and the leaders of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, concerning the conversion of sharecroppers into laborers, it did not estimate the extent to which this has been done. Considerable disagreement exists in the conclusions reached by writers who have published studies on this subject. See D. W. Watkins, "Agricultural Adjustment and Farm Tenure," *Journal of Farm Economics* (Menasha, Wis.), XVIII (August, 1936), 469-76; Wilson Gee, "Acreage Reduction and the Displacement of Farm Labor," *ibid.*, XVII (August, 1935), 522-28; Gordon W. Blackwell, "The Displaced Tenant Farm Family in North Carolina," *Social Forces*, XIII (October, 1934), 69; Carl C. Taylor, Helen W. Wheeler, and Ellis L. Kirkpatrick, *Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture*, Farm Security Administration, Social Research Report No. VIII (Washington, 1938), 43; and Richards, *Cotton and the AAA*, 155-61. Figures compiled from Census Bureau publication show that between 1930 and 1935 the number of colored tenants declined in all the ten states in which cotton was an important crop. The number of white croppers declined in eight states and that of colored croppers in seven. In Arkansas the number of white croppers declined by 16.7 per cent and that of colored croppers by 9.9 per cent from 1930 to 1935. *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee*, Table VI, pp. 98-99. The extent to which the decline in the number of sharecroppers is attributable directly to the acreage reduction program cannot be determined from the census figures, but, as one study has suggested, there would be "few people gullible enough to believe that the acreage devoted to cotton can be reduced one-third without an accompanying decrease in the laborers engaged in its production." Fred C. Frey and T. Lynn Smith, "The Influence of the AAA Cotton Program upon the Tenant, Cropper, and Laborer," *Rural Sociology* (Baton Rouge), I (December, 1936), 489.

jurisdiction of State agencies." The report recommended that the federal government set up a Farm Security Administration in the Department of Agriculture to implement a program of "land for tenants." The Secretary of Agriculture should be authorized, through the new agency, to acquire suitable farm land to be made available to selected tenants, the report said.⁶⁴

Blackstone, representative of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union on the committee, filed a minority report expressing disagreement with the philosophy of "small homesteads" for tenants and offering a number of counter-suggestions.⁶⁵ In forwarding the committee's report to Congress, Roosevelt did not refer to or support any of these suggestions. Evoking the "American dream of the family-size farm, owned by the family which operates it," the President warned that the tenancy problem had reached such magnitude that action could no longer be postponed.⁶⁶ The program that the President commended to Congress was, however, a cautious and conservative one. Secretary Wallace himself had admitted on one occasion that with an annual outlay of \$50,000,000 it would take 230 years to find farms for the existing number of tenants at a cost of \$4,000 per farm.⁶⁷ According to President Roosevelt the number of tenants in the United States was increasing at the rate of 40,000 per year. But neither he nor many members of Congress gave firm support to even this modest program aiming at a partial solution of the tenancy problem. When the House Committee on Agriculture struck from the bill the section providing for an annual appropriation of \$50,000,000, Roosevelt contented himself with an attempt to obtain a smaller amount or even a mere recognition of the principle of assistance to tenants.⁶⁸

The proposed deletion was not accepted, but the original allotment was scaled down to a more modest beginning. As finally adopted in July, 1937, the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenancy Act provided for an appropriation of \$10,000,000 in 1938; \$25,000,000 in 1939; and \$50,000,000 annually thereafter, out of which the Secretary of Agriculture was authorized to give low-interest loans to selected tenants for the purchase of farms. The loans were to be repaid over a period of forty years; and the newly organized Farm

⁶⁴ *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee*, 12, 17-18.

⁶⁵ "Minority Report of W. L. Blackstone, Representing the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union on the President's Farm Tenancy Committee," *ibid.*, 20-22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁶⁷ *New York Times*, December 17, 1936, p. 9. See also James G. Maddox, "The Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, IV (October, 1937), 451.

⁶⁸ *New York Times*, April 1, 1937, p. 1. Arthur Krock, the well-informed Washington correspondent of the *Times*, interpreted Roosevelt's budget message for the year as "serving notice on tenancy enthusiasts to make a modest start." *Ibid.*, April 22, 1937, p. 22.

Security Administration became the agency through which the work was to be handled.

In theory this program meant a promise of opportunity for America's sharecroppers to improve their economic and social status; but in reality it could provide assistance to only a very small proportion of those who might wish to become the owners of the farms they cultivated. According to Census Bureau publications there were 2,865,155 tenants in the United States in 1935, representing 42.1 per cent of the total number of farmers.⁶⁹ By the end of 1941, the Farm Security Administration had given loans to only 20,748 tenants for the purchase of farms, and the agency reported that it had received about twenty applications for every loan that it was able to make out of the available funds. In Arkansas, which had a total of 151,759 tenant farmers in 1935, only 1,399 had been successful in obtaining loans during the period covered by this report.⁷⁰ With less than one per cent of its tenant-sharecropper population receiving any direct benefit from the government's program, it was obvious that little progress had been made toward a satisfactory solution of the state's problem.

The meagerness of these results, however, should not be permitted to obscure the more important fact that the problems of the sharecropper-tenant element in Arkansas served as a basis for the discussion and testing of two sharply divergent views of governmental power and responsibility in matters relating to social and economic affairs. That Norman Thomas drew upon his knowledge of the events in Arkansas to launch a general attack on New Deal agricultural policies seems clear. That the Roosevelt administration, despite its professed concern for "the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid," did not give adequate consideration to the needs of the tenants in framing and applying the Agricultural Adjustment Act is also apparent. But Thomas' unceasing efforts to focus public attention on the plight of the sharecroppers in Arkansas failed to bring about a correction of the features of the cotton program that adversely affected their interests.

When Secretary Wallace and the officials of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration took the position that the law did not permit them to do more than they were doing to protect the rights of the sharecroppers, they were technically correct. And in following up such a line of explanation it has been argued that any further governmental action would have amounted to an extension of control over the private property of landlords for the benefit of another group — a development that in 1933 was not a

⁶⁹ *Farm Tenancy: Report of the President's Committee*, Table I, p. 89.

⁷⁰ *Report of the Administrator of the Farm Security Administration, 1941* (Washington, 1942), 17, 31-32.

part of American practice or tradition. On the other hand, the critic might still legitimately ask whether it was really beyond the ingenuity and authority of Roosevelt and Wallace to have drawn up a program that would have assured a more equitable return to sharecroppers retained in employment and some protection to them against arbitrary eviction. But as the New Deal made way for the war effort after December, 1941, the farm tenancy picture improved in Arkansas, as in the nation as a whole. The military draft and employment opportunities in war plants in the South and elsewhere, together with the continuing progress of mechanization, were to have a far greater effect than either the proposals of Norman Thomas or the agricultural policies of the Roosevelt administration in reversing the growth of tenancy in the United States.

UNITED STATES' RECOGNITION OF THE SOVIET UNION

American practices and policies relating to diplomatic recognition of other countries have undergone several important changes in the present century. Throughout the 19th century the United States extended at least *de facto* recognition to any regime that in fact exercised authority over a country whether the United States approved of that regime or not. However, even during those years there were signs of the later tendency to inject a moral test into the question of recognition. During the Hungarian revolution of 1848, for instance, the Taylor administration instructed its special agent, A. Dudley Mann, to give the revolutionary regime assurance of United States recognition. When the Austrian government discovered and protested this message as an interference in its affairs, Secretary of State Daniel Webster defended his country's right to manifest interest in the European revolutions, asserting that they "appeared to have their origin in those great ideas of responsible and popular governments on which the American constitutions themselves are founded."

It remained for the Wilson administration to translate this tendency into practice. In justifying its attitudes toward the Mexican revolutionary governments and, more especially, toward the Soviet Union, the administration continually spoke of "honor" and "morality." The United States was convinced, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby wrote in 1920, "that the existing regime in Russia is based upon the negation of every principle of honor and good faith, and every usage and convention, underlying the whole structure of international law; the negation, in short, of every principle upon which it is possible to base harmonious and trustful relations, whether of nations or of individuals . . . there cannot be any common ground upon which [the United States] can stand with a Power whose conceptions of international relations are so entirely alien to its own, so utterly repugnant to its moral sense. There can be no mutual confidence or trust, no respect even."

It was not until the post-World War II years, however, that the United States attempted to extend political non-recognition into the economic and even cultural spheres. Current American practices toward Communist China and Cuba are not those which were applied to the Soviet Union in the 'twenties. As Professor Paul F. Boller, Jr. of Southern Methodist University illustrates in the following article,

the United States continued to maintain important economic ties with the Soviet Union throughout the 'twenties. It was, in fact, precisely this factor that was crucial in leading to a reassessment of America's non-recognition policy. Boller's essay helps to substantiate the thesis put forward in Professor Williams' article, (p. 366, above), that American ties with the rest of the world were far more extensive in the 'twenties than it has been supposed. Americans did business with the Soviet Union, a growing number of them visited it, wrote about it, and attempted to learn from its experiments. An interesting discussion of the latter development may be found in L. S. Feuer, "American Travelers to the Soviet Union 1917-1932: The Formation of a Component of New Deal Ideology," *American Quarterly*, XIV (Summer 1962) 119-149.

Until recently at least, American isolation has in no instance been complete, not even toward nations considered to be the primary adversaries of the United States. Boller's article demonstrates the dangers of viewing events of the past exclusively through the prism of present attitudes. The dominant American attitudes toward the Soviet Union in the late 'twenties and the 'thirties differed from those which prevailed in the 'fifties, though the difference was often obscured in the crisis-filled years of the latter decade. The impact of the Russian Revolution upon American intellectuals is discussed in C. Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1962). G. Kennan's *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston, 1960), contains a concise history of United States-Soviet Union relations.

The "Great Conspiracy" of 1933: A Study in Short Memories

PAUL F. BOLLER, JR.

On the tenth of October, 1933, seven months after assuming office, President Franklin Roosevelt sent off a note to Mikhail Kalinin, President of the All-Union Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, calling attention to "the desirability of an effort to end the present abnormal relations between 125,000,000 people in the United States and the 160,000,000 people of Russia." Adding that it was regrettable that the two countries "should now be without a practical method of communicating with each other," Roosevelt invited Kalinin to send a repre-

From the *Southwest Review* (Spring 1954) 97-112, by permission of the author and the *Southwest Review*.

sentative to Washington to discuss outstanding questions at issue between the two nations. A few days later, the Soviet President accepted Roosevelt's invitation and designated Maxim Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, as emissary to the United States. Early the following month, Commissar Litvinov arrived in New York, proceeded to Washington where he was greeted at Union Station by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and immediately paid a ceremonial visit to Franklin Roosevelt.

Negotiations to remove what Litvinov called "that artificial barrier which has for sixteen years prevented normal intercourse between the peoples of our two countries" proceeded swiftly. There were a few days of conferences at the White House and at the State Department, interspersed with lunches and dinners honoring Litvinov. Then, late in the night of November 16, the President and the Commissar, with State and Treasury Department officials present, brought their discussions to a close and exchanged five sets of diplomatic notes. The next day, Roosevelt announced to nearly two hundred correspondents who "pack-jammed" his White House office that at "ten minutes before midnight" on November 16, 1933, the United States Government had finally resumed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union after a lapse of sixteen years.

In this fashion, according to a theory now being sedulously advanced in certain quarters in this country, was the Great Conspiracy consummated. From the day of recognition, it appears, we can trace all the present troubles of the United States and the woes of the world at large. More than any other single factor, so the new thesis now circulating runs, it was recognition of the Soviet Union in late 1933 that gave the steadily disintegrating Bolshevik regime a new lease on life and started it off on its program of world-wide imperialist expansion. And who was responsible for this great act of betrayal? Why, Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal crowd, of course. Roosevelt "took action virtually on his own, rejecting the counsel of elder statesmen who thought we should wait awhile before opening our doors to Soviet diplomats," declared Bascom N. Timmons, columnist for the *Dallas Times Herald*, on November 17, 1953. "Russia was recognized solely because Franklin D. Roosevelt as President insisted upon it," stated a *Dallas Morning News* editorial two days later.

At the very least, according to present-day critics of Roosevelt's action twenty years ago, the New Deal "brain trust" was "soft" toward communism, filled with ecstasy at the prospect of doing business with Soviet leaders; at the worst, Roosevelt and his associates were co-conspirators with the Kremlin, prepared to go to any lengths to welcome a pariah among nations back into the respectable world community and to facilitate the dissemination of communist propaganda within the United States. No sensible, God-

fearing, patriotic American, the theory goes, would have touched this international outlaw with a ten-foot pole in 1933. But here, as elsewhere, the American people were helpless victims of New Deal machinations. And we have been paying a heavy price for this folly — or treachery — ever since.

So far as I can discover, this new thesis regarding Soviet recognition was first put forward in the pages of the *American Mercury* during the campaign year of 1952. "The gravest charge against the Democratic party," wrote *Mercury* editor William Bradford Huie in September, 1952, "is that it allowed evil and naive men within it to convert it into a vehicle which aided the growth of Soviet Russia and the extension of Soviet power." It is a "historic fact," he observed, that it started on its iniquitous course "when it championed recognition of the Soviet Union" in 1933.

A corollary to the Roosevelt-New-Deal-Recognition-Conspiracy thesis has been developed by William F. Buckley, Jr., a recent Yale alumnus whose *God and Man at Yale* raised a minor tempest at his alma mater in 1951. In an article for the March, 1952, *Mercury* entitled "The Colossal Flunk," the zealous young fact-finder produced another exposé: "How our professors have betrayed the American people." "The outstanding example of betrayal by the American professoriate occurred, according to Buckley, on "that day in November, 1933, when the President of the United States . . . clasped the hand of Maxim Litvinoff and extended full diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union." Buckley poses this searching question:

Now whose responsibility was it to confront Franklin Roosevelt with the available and overwhelming evidence that this capricious act was nothing more than an invitation to the Comintern to set up in the United States hemispheric headquarters for a violent revolutionary movement . . . ?

The answer is self-evident: "The responsibility sat squarely on the shoulders of the academic community." Yet, Buckley continues sorrowfully,

a survey of the literature of the day reveals hardly a dissenting wave length originating from the nation's ivory towers. The reverse, in fact, was the case: the academic journals of the period treated compassionately and even encouragingly American Recognition, which served immeasurably to fortify Stalin's then faltering domestic position. . . . [This was the] academic betrayal of 1933.

Well, as Al Smith used to say, let's take a look at the record. Let's attempt to do what presumably Bascom Timmons, the anonymous *Dallas News* editorial writer, William Bradford Huie, and William Buckley did before citing their various charges: examine the record. We might, in fact, begin by taking a look at Al Smith's own record. True, he was a liberal of

a sort, and thus suspect; but he was never actually a full-fledged New Dealer, and in 1940 he finally broke completely with Roosevelt. Furthermore, he remained a devout Roman Catholic throughout his life. He was never, so far as I know, accused of subversion or even of "creeping socialism." Seven months before Roosevelt's overtures to Kalinin — a few days before Roosevelt's inauguration, to be exact — Smith appeared before the Senate Finance Committee and announced flatly: "I believe that we ought to recognize Russia; I do not know any reason for not doing it." The crowd that jammed the committee room, with "spectators standing two apiece on chairs," listened intently as the popular, cigar-smoking, brown-derbied New Yorker explained his views:

Somebody says they owe us \$100,000,000. We kept troops in Russia for quite a while when we were not at war with them [a reference to Allied intervention in North Russia and Siberia, 1918-20], and we did some damage to them. I think we could sit around the table and settle that matter very easily.

There is no use in trading with them under cover. We are doing it. Through the Amtorg, or whatever you call it, the Russian Trading Company, our material and stuff is getting into Russia.

We might just as well be represented there and let them be represented here at Washington and let us do business with them in the open.

Smith made it clear that he had no use for the Soviet form of government; but he insisted that Bolshevism represented no real threat to the American system.

I do not think myself they are making any headway with this Communism. If there would be any place where you would see some of it, you would see it in a city like New York, and it does not mean anything down there. New York is contented. The people are satisfied. They are suffering, but they are satisfied.

Now and then down in Union Square there are a half a dozen crack-pots jump up on the platform and holler out at the people, but that has been going on down there since I was a boy.

Most newspapers appeared to agree with Smith. It is "a stupid policy that has for all these years kept the Russian market closed to us," commented the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* found it "a pleasure to see Al blow away the cobwebs." Urging immediate recognition, the *New York World-Telegram* asserted that "Russia is the only place we can get a large foreign market quickly for much of our surplus production — and a market which has the unusual distinction in these times of never defaulting on its trade payments." The *Providence News-Tribune* saw advantages from recognition going far beyond benefits to American trade:

. . . there is a good deal to be said for the point of view that closer connection between the people of Russia and the peoples of what are called the capitalistic countries would result in the Soviet system going under rather than otherwise. Wild blood is not tamed or taught to be man's friend instead of his enemy by being left to roam and rave through its native jungle.

Surveying newspaper response as a whole throughout the country, the *Literary Digest* concluded that the "majority of editors" sided with Al.

There is no question but that the generally sympathetic reaction to Smith's recommendations represented an almost complete transformation of American attitudes toward the Soviet Union from those prevailing in the years immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution. The American people, from President Wilson on down, had greeted with unanimous enthusiasm the collapse of Czarist autocracy in March, 1917, and its replacement by a Provisional Government based upon constitutional democratic principles. But their optimism had given way first to bewilderment and then to dismay when, the following November, the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky overthrew the Kerensky government and proclaimed a communistic dictatorship. As the Bolsheviks proceeded, in rapid succession, to sign a separate peace with Germany, repudiate all Russian debts, organize the Third Communist International, and consolidate their power within Russia by "Red terror," American opinion changed quickly to indignation and revulsion. Thus when the Bolsheviks attempted in June, 1918, and again in March, 1919, to establish formal diplomatic relations with the United States, there was general support in the country for President Wilson's stern refusal to have anything to do with them. In explaining why the United States "recoils" from recognition, Bainbridge Colby, Wilson's secretary of state, defined the official American attitude toward the Soviet regime in August, 1920:

. . . the existing regime in Russia is based upon the negation of every principle of honor and good faith, and every usage and convention, underlying the whole structure of international law; the negation, in short, of every principle upon which it is possible to base harmonious and trustful relations, whether of nations or of individuals.

Nonrecognition was about the only policy to survive the Harding landslide in 1920, and it became the fixed policy of the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations, despite repeated efforts by the Soviets to resume diplomatic relations with each new administration.

It is important to note, however, that diplomatic nonrecognition did not mean economic nonrecognition during these years. In 1920 Washington lifted its ban on commercial relations with the Soviets, and American busi-

ness firms began at once to enter into trade agreements with unofficial Soviet representatives in the United States. Many firms negotiated contracts with Amtorg Trading Company providing for adjustment of claims arising out of Soviet confiscations of American property during the revolution. Others, like General Electric, General Motors, Standard Oil, and International Harvester, granted sizable commercial credits to the Soviets for relatively long terms, while the Chase National Bank and Equitable Trust Company financed short-term loans for the purchase of American cotton. Even Hamilton Fish, who in the 1930's, as Republican congressman from New York, was to be a leading antirecognitionist, took a trip to Russia and returned to tell the New York Kiwanis that Russia offered great business opportunities. As late as March, 1926, he was still interested enough to introduce a resolution in Congress urging President Coolidge to create a commission composed of representatives of

the manufacturing, commercial, financial, agricultural, and exporting and importing interests of the United States, together with Government officials, which would . . . endeavor to reopen trade and commercial relations with the people of Russia with a view to the resumption of trade and commerce . . . and for the exchange of missions, pending the settlement of political relations between the two countries.

Despite the absence of governmental encouragement, however, American-Russian trade increased steadily during the 1920's, and by 1928 the United States was exporting three times as much to Russia as it had in 1913. Then, in 1928-29, when Russia launched its first Five-Year Plan — a program for heavy industrial development and agricultural collectivization dependent, to an important extent, on imports from abroad — there was a sharp rise in American exports to the Soviets. By 1930 the United States had become the chief exporter to the Soviet Union, and the Soviets had become the world's largest purchaser of American agricultural and industrial equipment.

Furthermore, during the late 1920's American firms began sending engineers, technicians, and industrial experts to Russia to provide technical assistance on Soviet projects; and by 1930 some thirty firms, including DuPont, Ford, General Electric, RCA, and Sperry Gyroscope, were participating in such arrangements. Reversing the process, Henry Ford invited Russian engineers to come to America to study so that they might "perfect themselves" in the techniques of mass production. Infuriated at the friendly relations developing between American business and the Soviets, Father Charles E. Coughlin of Detroit accused Henry Ford, along with the Chase National Bank and J. P. Morgan ("which is not certainly an American institution"), of "subsidizing" Bolshevism, while Ralph M. Easley, chairman

of the American Civic Federation, began calling Standard Oil's Ivy L. Lee "Comrade" and concluded angrily that the growing rapprochement between the two countries was a matter of "plain dollars and cents!"

"Plain dollars and cents" undoubtedly played a major role in the gradual development of sentiment for recognition in the years before 1933. Ivy Lee remarked that "the most significant fact about the present Russian regime was the personal honesty of the men in charge." Returning from a visit to Russia, James D. Mooney, vice-president of General Motors, declared that "the initiation of full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Republics was necessary in the interest of the development of normal trade relations." A poll taken in May, 1932, of fifty firms dealing with Russia revealed that twenty-two favored immediate recognition and that only four were definitely opposed. Among those who spoke out in favor of recognition were the presidents of Sullivan Machinery Company of Chicago and C. O. Bartlett & Sons Company of Cleveland, Edward A. Filene of William Filene's Sons Company of Boston, and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, a business organization, which passed a resolution favoring recognition. "What about Russia?" queried *Business Week* in June, 1932. "Washington has refused consistently to deal with the question. Business is more friendly." The views of corporation lawyer Paul D. Cravath doubtless reflected those of an increasingly larger segment of the American business and financial world during the late 1920's and early 1930's. Insisting that "recognition does not remotely involve approval of Soviet principle and methods," Cravath declared:

The obvious advantages of a policy of recognition are those upon which the whole system of diplomatic relations between civilized nations is based. Our government would be in a position through its diplomatic representatives to protect life, liberty and property of Americans visiting, or sojourning, in Russia, of whom there are already several thousand annually, who are now dependent upon the good offices of the diplomatic representatives of other governments. Our government would be able by the usual diplomatic methods to encourage and protect American trade with Russia. There is much force in the view that when . . . our government . . . encouraged American merchants and manufacturers to engage in trade with Russia, it owed our citizens the duty of protecting this trade by the usual diplomatic machinery. . . . With an Ambassador at Moscow and consuls in the principal trading centers of Russia, our government would be able to assemble reliable information for the guidance of our merchants, manufacturers and bankers. . . .

As American business moved steadily in the direction of recognition during the early 1930's, it was joined by a similar movement in the press and in

politics. In the spring of 1932 Roy Howard, president of Scripps-Howard Newspaper Service, began a recognition campaign in his influential newspaper chain. "I think the menace of Bolshevism in the United States is about as great as the menace of sunstroke in Greenland or chilblains in the Sahara," he told the vice-president of the Chase National Bank. Beginning in 1930, Senator William E. Borah (Rep., Idaho), who had been a steadfast advocate of recognition throughout the 1920's, was supported in his views by an increasing number of senatorial colleagues. Senator Burton K. Wheeler (Dem., Mont.) declared that by "all the rules of international law and practice, they are entitled to recognition." Democrats like Senators Barkley, Ladd, Pittman, and Robinson, and Republicans like Senators Cutting, Johnson, Brookhart, LaFollette, Norris, and Nye added their voices to the rising chorus.

It is clear that by 1933 many of the arguments against recognition had lost much of their weight. World-wide depression had forced most European nations to join Russia in defaulting on World War I debts to the United States, and the Russian debt began to seem far less important than formerly. In addition, the "dollars and cents" argument for recognition took on new meaning as the depression widened throughout the United States, and the prospect of recognition and increased trade began to appear more and more attractive as a means of helping to pull the economy out of the doldrums. Trade with Russia, explained Thomas Campbell, a Montana "mass production farmer," is "one of the best ways to help terminate our industrial depression." Furthermore, the rise of Hitler in Germany and the threat of Japanese expansion in the Orient added a compelling new argument in favor of reconciliation with Russia: it might serve as a stabilizing factor in the precarious international situation.

Finally, fear of communist propaganda had gradually waned throughout the period. After Stalin broke with Trotsky in 1926 and announced, "We have had enough of that idiotic slogan, 'The World Revolution,'" it appeared to many Americans that Russia had abandoned its program of world revolution and was settling down to the far less menacing job of "building socialism in one country." Communism in America, it was noted, was still a negligible factor; and in any case, the fundamental bulwark against communism was not nonrecognition but a strong and viable American system. "I have no sympathy with communism," said Gifford Pinchot, Republican governor of Pennsylvania, "but I am not afraid of it nor of the recognition of Russia by this country." Senator Bronson Cutting (Rep., N. M.) even went so far as to welcome communist propaganda: "In the battle of propaganda on both sides, in a battle where the facts could be made available to both sides, I have no doubt of the final issue." In January, 1933,

the *New York Times* reported that of fifty-one senators polled, twenty-two favored recognition, twenty declined to commit themselves, and only nine recorded their opposition. "Time and events," admitted the *Times*, long an opponent of recognition, "have been wearing down the obstacles standing in the way of correct relations between the United States and Soviet Russia."

It cannot be said, therefore, that Al Smith's remarks before the Senate committee in March, 1933, were in any way unusual; nor is it surprising that the "majority of editors" considered his recommendations the plain common sense of the matter. Joined by business and financial circles, the editors continued to "side with Al" as the United States moved steadily in the direction of recognition in the months following his appearance before the Senate. Early in July, *Time* reported that Litvinov, once accustomed to being snubbed by American secretaries of state, "now hobnobs in friendly fashion" with Secretary Hull at the World Economic Conference then in session in London. Talk of recognition "grew serious," according to the *New York Times*, when it became known that William C. Bullitt, executive officer of the United States delegation, had an hour's talk with Litvinov and that Senator James Couzens (Rep., Mich.) lunched with a second Soviet delegate, Valerie I. Mezhlank. Since this was not the first time that Bullitt had conferred with Litvinov at the London conference, it appeared that "serious exploratory work" on the recognition problem was under way.

Out of the friendly hobnobbing in London came a "thumping deal" between Litvinov and Assistant Secretary of State Raymond Moley by which, said *Time*, "the soft opening wedge" for recognition was to be "a great wad of cotton." This deal was announced in Washington by Jesse Jones, chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation: an RFC loan of \$4,000,000 to the Soviet Union for the purchase of surplus cotton in the United States. This is "the first time since the World War," noted the *Literary Digest*, "that the Government sanctions a business deal with Russia." There was general agreement that the RFC loan constituted "informal recognition" of Russia. Within a few weeks, the RFC had received some forty requests for further loans to enable American manufacturers to sell to Russia on credit. With some amusement, the *Nation*, a liberal weekly which, along with the *New Republic*, had favored recognition since the early 1920's, printed a cartoon in which an American businessman, confronted by a Russian with hat in hand, is saying to a woman representing the American press: "Be nice to him, dear."

Both the press and the business world were extremely nice to him. So, too, were the politicians. When, on October 20, the text of the Roosevelt-Kalinin exchange was released to the press, the *New York Times* ran a story

on the first page headed: "ROOSEVELT'S MOVE WINS WIDE BACKING. Most of the Senators and Representatives Commenting Favor the Step." Among those expressing themselves as in favor of the move were Senators Elmer Thomas (Dem. Okla.), George McGill (Dem., Kan.), and Kenneth McKellar (Dem., Tenn.). Senator Robert Reynolds (Dem., N.C.) was joined by Senator James Couzens (Rep., Mich.) in calling for "immediate and full recognition." Arriving from Europe, Senator William G. McAdoo (Dem., Calif.) recalled that he had long favored recognition. His colleague Senator Hiram Johnson (Rep., Calif.) thought recognition would be "wise, sensible, and statesmanlike." Speaker of the House Henry A. Rainey (Dem., Ill.) declared the recognition would open an "outlet for our surplus goods." Senator Cutting brushed aside fears of Soviet propaganda by quoting Karl Radek: "Revolutions are not carried in suitcases. They cannot be imported; they grow."

Like the senators, American bankers and businessmen, according to the *Times*, were particularly interested in the development of trade relations that would follow recognition. Many of them felt that the "potentialities of trade with this economically youthful country were unlimited." To reassure those who were still wavering on the recognition issue, officials of General Electric and RCA, both of which "have had large dealings with the Soviet," announced that "at all times their relations with Soviet Russia have been eminently satisfactory." Reversing its previous stand, the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, whose membership included leading business and banking houses, came out for recognition. The United States Board of Trade took similar action.

The city of Seattle was especially excited by the prospects: "SEATTLE SEES TRADE BOOM" was the front-page headline in the *New York Times*. "Shipping men, port authorities and other business heads" forecast "the opening of a new trade era" for the city. The president of the Pacific National Bank and the Seattle Clearing House Association was quoted as saying that recognition might open the door for "large transactions" and that Seattle, the closest American port to Vladivostok, would see a "revival of shipping."

Newspaper editors sided as energetically with Roosevelt in October as they had with Al Smith in March. "Sensible and sober men," said the *Baltimore Sun*, will regard Roosevelt's invitation to Kalinin "with undivided approval." All over the country, such papers as the *Hartford Courant*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, the *Des Moines Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Portland Oregonian* expressed similar sentiments. The United States should "properly be on friendly terms with Russia and aid in its industrial development," said the *Dallas News*. "It should enable it also to retain its place as

a Pacific power, thus checking to some extent Japanese ambitions in the Far East."

In *Collier's*, Ray Tucker welcomed Roosevelt's move as a return to sensible relations and an important stimulant to trade. *Time* saw in Kalinin's swift response to Roosevelt "two or three triumphs" for the President:

(1) Never before had the Soviets agreed to discuss differences with a sovereign power before their own sovereignty was recognized. (2) Upon excited Europe and the Far East . . . the drawing together of Russia and the U.S. must have a quieting effect. (3) The quieting effect upon U.S.-domestic excitements was instant and undisputed.

In the *Literary Digest*, Ernest K. Lindley asserted that nonrecognition was an "anomaly which has seemed grotesque to an increasing number of people." "With the future of its own great domestic experiment at stake," wrote Lindley, "the Soviet influence has been overwhelmingly on the side of peace." William Phillips Simms, Scripps-Howard foreign editor, agreed with Lindley that time had vastly modified objections to recognition. "The real value of the meeting in Washington," said *Business Week*, "will be the agreement of the two countries to carry on trade relations on a normal basis. If this be provided, business will do much for itself in the development of trade with the Soviet Union."

The *Washington Daily News* summed up much of the prevailing opinion in a cartoon picturing Uncle Sam in bed, "Waking up AT LAST," as a telephone labeled "Russia" jingles merrily to the tune of "Trade OPPORTUNITIES." And the *Kansas City Star* ridiculed fears of communist propaganda in a cartoon which showed Uncle Sam and Russia smiling at each other across a fence in which hangs a sign reading "QUARANTINE: Revolutionary Measles." Russia is pointing to the sign; but Uncle Sam, holding a briefcase loaded with "Orders," beams back: "I've already had it — in a mild form." The caption: "HE SURELY WON'T CATCH IT NOW."

There were, to be sure, a number of vigorous protests as Litvinov arrived in Washington and went into a huddle with Roosevelt and Hull. Senator David A. Reed (Rep., Pa.) was "awfully sorry" about it; the *Washington Star* favored recognition only if Russia promised not to carry on "subversive agitation" in the United States; the *Los Angeles Times* favored it only if Russia was willing to "behave in an internationally civilized manner." A group calling itself the "Paul Reveres" telegraphed a protest to the White House; Edward A. Hayes, national commander of the American Legion, deplored the negotiations — though Representative Wright Patman of Texas assured Roosevelt that not more than 5 per cent of the Legion membership would be antagonized by recognition — and the American Alliance,

headed by Major General Mark L. Hersey, Ely Culbertson, Bishop James E. Freeman, Martin Littleton, Nathan D. Perlman, Rabbi Abram Simon, Rev. Edmund A. Walsh, and Grover Whalen, announced a series of radio programs to oppose recognition. The American Federation of Labor sent Roosevelt a long document containing a "damning indictment" of recognition, reasserting the fixed policy of William Green, Matthew Woll, and other AF of L leaders toward the Soviet Union since 1917.

But these were minor ripples compared to the tidal wave of opinion favoring Roosevelt's action. Shortly before Litvinov's arrival in Washington, the American Foundation published a long report urging recognition. Signers of the report included, among others, James D. Mooney, president of the General Motors Export Company; Thomas S. Gates, president of the University of Pennsylvania; Thomas W. Lamont of J. P. Morgan and Company; George M. Houston, president of Baldwin Locomotive Works; Roscoe Pound, dean of the Harvard School of Law; General William N. Haskell of the National Guard of New York; J. H. Rand, Jr., president of Remington Rand Corporation; Thomas A. Morgan, president of Curtis Wright; Dr. Walter G. Alvarez of the Mayo Clinic; and Judge Curtis Bok of Philadelphia. At the same time, the foundation announced that in a poll it had taken of 1,139 dailies in the country, 63 per cent had voted for recognition, 2.6 per cent favored it with qualifications, and only 26.9 per cent were opposed. A breakdown of the figures indicated that the greatest sentiment for recognition was to be found in the South and in the large eastern states, with the greatest opposition appearing in New England. In an analysis of the political complexion of the newspapers, *Editor and Publisher* reported that the favorable vote did not reflect "party lines." The position of the *Dallas News* may be taken as typical of the views of two-thirds of American newspapers at this time:

President Roosevelt returns to the older theory of recognition that a Government is entitled to recognition if it is in full possession of the Government, if it is able to maintain order and protect life and property, and if its rule is acquiesced in by the people. Russia fulfills these conditions and all that now remains is to reach agreements respecting debts and pledges against propaganda. These agreements can be made in principle and details worked out through appointed commissions.

Some object to recognition on the ground that Russia's system of government is communistic and in general antireligious. Internationally, however, each State in theory has the right to determine its own form of government and sphere of activity. . . . The general opinion in this country is that Russia and the United States should resume normal and diplomatic relations, since they have many common inter-

ests, especially in the Far East, and can readily develop trade relations, mutually profitable. . . .

To the *Dallas News*, Russia was "Just Another Customer." A *News* cartoon portrayed a Russian woman waiting before the counter of a general store to make her purchases while Uncle Sam, the clerk, tells two protesting women (the AF of L and the DAR): "Listen! I ain't goin' to *marry* the gall!"

While probably not everyone agreed with Stanley High that Litvinov was "the leading candidate for the current year's Nobel Peace Award," the Commissar met, in general, an extremely warm reception in this country. "The thing that has amazed me," commented Oswald Garrison Villard in the *Nation*, "is that there has been no terrific outburst of protest from the Daughters of the Revolution, the Sons of the Revolution, Ham Fish, or Ralph M. Easley. I thought they would be holding mass meetings at Carnegie Hall." Somewhat disappointedly, he added: "But there hasn't been a peep from them."

When Litvinov reached Washington, the Roosevelt administration was fully prepared to get down to brass tacks. The question of recognition had been given thoughtful and serious consideration for many months. Letters favoring or disapproving recognition had been accumulating in the "right-hand drawer" of Secretary Hull's desk from his very first day in office; in addition, he had been receiving one delegation after another with views to express on the matter. From the very beginning, Hull had felt that "certain conditions" had arisen which had not been "fully present under previous Administrations" and that the Russian question merited fresh consideration. As he told Molotov nine years later, after the United States had entered World War II,

When I came to the State Department in 1933, I recommended recognition of the Soviet Government on several important grounds. Probably the most important was the great need and opportunity for co-operation between our two Governments during the years ahead for the purpose of promoting and preserving conditions of peace in the world. My further grounds were the traditional friendship between the peoples of the two countries and the fact that it was contrary to the best interests of two great nations such as the Soviets and ourselves not to be on speaking terms diplomatically in view of the existing circumstances in the international field.

At the London Economic Conference in June and July, Hull discussed the subject "elaborately" with a number of foreign ministers attending the meeting, and he also conferred with Litvinov, whom he found a "thor-

oughly capable diplomat and international statesman," with an "agreeable personality." Returning from London in August, Hull outlined in a memorandum to the President the problems involved in recognition. In his *Memoirs* (1948) he tells us:

In some respects we stood to gain more than Russia by a restoration of diplomatic relations. Without relations, the Russians were probably much better informed about conditions in America than we were about the situation in Russia. . . . Moreover, it was easier for the Russians to do business in the United States without diplomatic protection than it was for Americans to do business in Russia.

Four points, he told Roosevelt, would have to be settled before any agreement could be reached with the Russians: (1) the question of communist propaganda; (2) freedom of religion for United States citizens in Russia; (3) fair treatment of American citizens in Russia; and (4) settlement of the debts, both governmental and private, which were owed by Russia.

Satisfactory settlement of all four points mentioned by Hull in his memorandum was insisted upon by Roosevelt and his advisers before they would consent to grant formal recognition to the Soviet Union. According to William Bullitt, an "ardent proponent of recognition" (Hull) and a prime mover in the events of October and November, Litvinov, "after refusing to sign such agreements so persistently that he was handed a schedule of steamship sailings and told to sign or go home, did sign them on Nov. 16, 1933, and we established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union." With respect to propaganda, Litvinov promised that it would be the "fixed policy" of his government to "refrain" from interference in American affairs. On the second point, Litvinov agreed that American citizens residing in Russia should be permitted "freedom of religious worship and exercise of ecclesiastical functions." In addition, Roosevelt prevailed upon Litvinov to accept a long series of guarantees respecting the rights of Americans in Russia. The question of debts (and Russian counterclaims for damages done by American troops in northern Russia during the period of Allied intervention, 1918-20) was left to future negotiations. As a "goodwill gesture," Litvinov waived claims for damages done by American forces in Siberia during and after World War I.

Upon conclusion of the agreement, Roosevelt named William C. Bullitt, who had been working tirelessly for recognition since 1919 and who, as special assistant to Hull, had played a prominent part in the negotiations, as first ambassador to the Soviet Union. "After 14 years his point was made" was the caption under *Time's* picture of the new ambassador.

The immediate reactions to the recognition settlement were just about what we might expect. Moscow, not surprisingly, hailed it as *Ochen hor-*

osho! (Very fine!), although *Pravda* could not resist a dig at William Green — "that yellow trade union bureaucrat" — for his bitter-end opposition. In Episcopal Church House, Philadelphia, Archdeacon the Rev. James P. Bullitt, uncle of the new ambassador, flared: "The United States has disgraced itself by establishing relations with a country which is beyond the pale — a pariah among nations!" Congressman Hamilton Fish denounced the "brain trust," and William Green reaffirmed AF of L hostility to the Soviet regime. Most of the oppositionists, however, accepted the decision with resignation and hoped for the best. Edward Hayes of the American Legion received Roosevelt's announcement "with the spirit of the soldier"; the *State Journal* of Lincoln, Nebraska, conceded that it "will be acceptable to a great majority"; and the *Los Angeles Times* expressed hope that it would "work out for the best interests of both countries."

In general, the American press greeted recognition with quiet satisfaction. *Time* reported that virtually all newspapers approved the agreement, or at least did not actively oppose it. Even such a formerly antirecognitionist paper as the *New York Herald Tribune* could "express nothing but approval." A *Dallas News* cartoon captioned "Tea for Two" showed Uncle Sam and Uncle Joe enjoying a spot of tea together from a teapot filled with "Friendship and Trade." Roosevelt, observed the *News*,

saw the absurdity of a continued refusal to recognize a great Nation with a stable Government. . . . Without question, the Nation as a whole will give sanction to this decision. Russia has a people of 160,000,000, occupying a large fraction of this earth's surface. In its civilization, it is Western, not Oriental, and it is certain to become within the next twenty-five years one of the greatest in the family of nations. . . .

After all, Sovietism is an experiment in a sort of democracy. . . . There will be the exchange of ideas and of political and cultural experiences, as a result of which each, it is to be hoped, may gain knowledge and wisdom from the other. The two peoples should be fast friends in the future as they were in the past.

On the front page, the *News* announced on November 18: "RECOGNITION AID TO SALE OF TEXAS COTTON IN RUSSIA. Millions of Bales Now Expected to be Sold to Soviet Consumers." According to the *News*, the reluctance of Americans to do business with the Soviets owing to absence of diplomatic relations

is now removed by the character of good standing which President Roosevelt's official announcement implies. For several months Jesse H. Jones, chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, has been maneuvering to make it possible for large shipments of raw and manufactured products into this reservoir of trade. . . . Russia has always

taken large amounts of Texas cotton which appeared to best serve its mill purposes. For instance in 1929 the Soviet bought nearly \$25,000,000 worth of Texas cotton, and in the remainder of the South, the expenditure was only \$6,000,000. During the last nine years Texas cotton to the value of about \$150,000,000 has been purchased by that Government.

Mr. Roosevelt's recognition of the Soviet, according to the prevailing Washington opinion, will be one of the most important accomplishments of his administration when the history is written. The step will have the approval of the business world. . . .

On the nineteenth, the *News* reported that Dallas expected "a marked business and industrial improvement" as a "direct result" of recognition. C. J. Crampton, executive secretary of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, was quoted as saying it "will certainly help our business." Others, like Sherwood H. Avery, secretary of the North Texas Foreign Trade Club, "were of the same opinion."

The enthusiasm of Dallas for the economic benefits of recognition was duplicated in other parts of the country. Francis T. Cole, executive vice-president of the American Manufacturers Export Association, made public a survey conducted among four hundred manufacturers analyzing the promising opportunities for business expected to follow from recognition and increased trade. C. W. Linscheid, president of the Export Managers' Club of New York, referred to recognition as "a distinct step forward." Similar statements were made by Samuel M. Vauclain, chairman of the board of Baldwin Locomotive Works, and Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., president of General Motors. A news story in the *New York Times* stated that Michigan was "likely to reap a financial harvest because of the expected demand for products, especially automobiles," and reported that George Feehan, of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce, had forecast a boom for American trade.

In Congress, the reaction was similarly favorable. Senator Borah, "dean of the recognitionists," was so pleased that he telegraphed congratulations from Boise, Idaho, to both Roosevelt and Litvinov. Typical of lawmakers who foresaw excellent results in terms of foreign trade and world peace were Democratic Senators Reynolds, Black, Thomas (both Elbert D. and Elmer), and Robinson, and Republican Senators Nye and Capper. Speaker of the House Rainey called recognition the "greatest thing in the world that has happened to bring about world peace."

Busily rounding up opinion in leftist circles, the *New York Times* reported that Norman Thomas' Socialist party approved of Roosevelt's action; in the opinion of the Socialists, the Comintern had been outlawed by Litvinov's pledge and the Communist party dealt a "death blow." The

Times ran into some difficulty, however, when it attempted to get a statement from leaders of the American Communist party. Recognition left the comrades "officially mute last night." At the offices of the *Daily Worker*, reporters were told that Earl Browder was "out of town, we don't know where, but may be back tomorrow." William Z. Foster was also out of town, and nobody knew where he was. Robert Minor was "at a beach in Virginia, but what beach was not known." Sam Don, editor of the *Worker*, told reporters there would be no editorial on the subject that day and declined to comment further. Since at this time Roosevelt was, in the opinion of American Stalinists, "the most effective agent Wall Street has had in several years," his cabinet "the new Wall Street hunger and war cabinet," and the NRA an "Industrial Slavery Act," the forerunner of "American fascism," the temporary bewilderment of CP, USA, over the new development is perhaps understandable. On this occasion, as on many others, the Kremlin had apparently not bothered to tip the American party off in advance, and the usually garrulous comrades were forced into one of their brief periods of silence pending official adjustment to the new line.

It is part of history, of course, that the high hopes that Americans entertained generally during 1933 for the future of American-Soviet relations failed of realization. Disillusionment began almost immediately in the months following recognition, and by the middle of 1935 had become quite widespread within administration circles as well as outside. In subsequent negotiations, the Soviets failed to agree on debt payments, and as a result the Roosevelt administration refused to extend credits through the Export-Import Bank (established in 1934 for that specific purpose) for Soviet purchases in this country. Though an increase in American-Soviet trade did develop after 1933, there was nothing like the trade boom anticipated by American business interests. Nor did Soviet leaders show any disposition to honor the pledge that Litvinov had made to refrain from interference in American internal affairs.

In the clear light of hindsight, this disillusionment may appear to have been inevitable. But it is impossible to escape the conclusion that Roosevelt's action on November 16, 1933, was heartily endorsed by the American people as a whole. The sound and fury that arise periodically in this country upon occasions of major foreign policy decisions — entry into World War II, the recall of General MacArthur from the Far East, the question of recognizing Red China — seem to have been notably absent while the question of Soviet recognition was being decided.

The contention that Roosevelt "took action virtually on his own" is simply untrue. If Roosevelt had decided on recognition by September, 1933, as Bullitt reports, he had been preceded in his decision by influential

spokesmen in the American press, business, financial, and political circles. If we are to talk of betrayals twenty years ago, then we shall be forced to place Business Betrayal and Newspaper Betrayal at the top of the list. The lure of trade seems to have been the primary motivation for prorecognition sentiment in this country in the early 1930's; but the threat posed by Nazi Germany and imperialist Japan appears to have figured most prominently in the calculations of Roosevelt and his associates. By the early fall of 1933, according to Bullitt,

both the President and I were convinced that Hitler would eventually make war unless England, France, and the Soviet Union should stand together against Nazi aggression. It seemed in our national interest to prevent the outbreak of a Hitler war and, therefore, to resume relations somewhat skeptically, with the Soviet Union. . . . The primary objective was to prevent the launching of another world war by Hitler.

It seemed nonsense, says Bullitt, for the United States to continue to snub Russia when "there seemed to be a faint possibility that we might obtain the co-operation of the Soviet government for the preservation of peace in both Europe and Asia." It is difficult to see anything sinister in that; given the circumstances of 1933, it seemed, as isolationist Senator Hiram Johnson put it, "wise, sensible, and statesmanlike."

Maxim Litvinov's successful trip to the United States wound up on November 24 with what the *Nation* called "the most extraordinary dinner ever given in New York City." Some 2,500 persons paid \$5.50 a plate for a Farewell Dinner (which included Beluge Caviar spread thin on toast, Borsch, and Filet of Beef Stroganoff) at Manhattan's Waldorf-Astoria on the eve of Litvinov's sailing for home. Although no Cardinal or other Catholic official was present, *Time* noted that the American Apostolic Church of America sent its chief prelate and that

the big warm room buzzed with the voices of General Motors' Sloan, General Electric's Gerard Swope, Ford's Sorensen, Pennsylvania's Atterbury, Baldwin Locomotive's Houston, Thomas A. Edison's son Charles, Theodore Roosevelt's son Kermit, Owen D. Young, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., and dowagers galore.

Mingling with the guests could also be found S. Parker Gilbert of the firm of J. P. Morgan, Loomis of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, Gordon Rentschler of the National City Bank, the head of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and the president of the American Chamber of Commerce. The high point of the evening undoubtedly came when the guests stood and faced a stage behind which hung a huge American flag and the Red flag with Soviet hammer and sickle while the organ played "My Country 'tis of

Thee" and then switched into the "Internationale." "Not a liberal editor appeared on the dais," observed the *Nation* ironically, "and hardly a man or woman who battled for Russian recognition when to do so was to invite contumely, insult, and abuse."

It would be nice if the expounders of the Roosevelt-Recognition-Conspiracy thesis would pause long enough in their current campaign of contumely, insult, and abuse to take a look at the Waldorf-Astoria's guest list for that *gemütlich* evening in New York City twenty years ago.

SOURCES OF AMERICAN RESISTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

In the introduction to W. A. Williams' article (page 365, above), it was argued that the entire question of American isolationism requires further investigation and precise definition. Nevertheless, it is clear that large segments of the American population have been reluctant to see their nation involved in the affairs of other nations, particularly those of Europe. That this reluctance has been more strongly based in the midwest than in any other section during the 20th century has puzzled and intrigued historians. Attempting to explain it, they have concentrated upon such factors as the insularity of the midwest, its lack of contact with and interest in Europe, its desire for economic self-sufficiency, and its general antipathy toward the east, which the Western mind often linked with Europe. Though each of these deserved attention, none by itself provided a satisfactory explanation, for the south shared in some and yet was counted as one of the most international-minded sections.

After World War II, political analyst Samuel Lubell dismissed the importance of geographical factors and focused upon ethnic considerations. In an article, "Who Votes Isolationist and Why," *Harper's Magazine*, CCII (April 1951) 29-36, and his book *The Future of American Politics* (Garden City, 1952), Lubell argued that the presence of large numbers of German and Scandinavian immigrants and their progeny in the midwest went a long way toward explaining that section's opposition to American entry into either world war on the side of Germany's enemies and its refusal to support the League of Nations, which was the product of a peace conference at whose hands Germany had been treated harshly. Lubell's argument was weakened by the experience of the post-World War II era. With West Germany now a staunch ally of the United States, midwestern Congressmen still tend to oppose such American overseas commitments as the Marshall Plan and foreign aid in general, still are skeptical of such international agencies as the United Nations, and still evince greater enthusiasm for at least a modified unilateralism than the representatives of any other section. Ethnic ties, however influential, were clearly not the main-spring of midwestern isolationism. For an examination of Lubell's thesis applied to one state, see R. P. Wilkins, "The Non-Ethnic Roots of North Dakota Isolationism," *Nebraska History*, XLIV (Sept. 1963)

205-221. For a discussion of recent isolationist sentiment and mid-western voting patterns, see A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The New Isolationism," *Atlantic Monthly*, CLXXXIX (May 1952) 34-38, and J. H. Fenton, "Liberal-Conservative Divisions by Sections of the United States," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCCXLIV (Nov. 1962) 122-127.

More persuasive than Lubell's thesis is that embodied in the following article by Ray Allen Billington of the Huntington Library. Professor Billington agrees with and tries to document the case for the mid-west as the geographical center of American isolationist thought and feeling. (For a dissenting viewpoint see W. G. Carleton, "Isolationism and the Middle West," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIII [Dec. 1946] 377-390.) His explanation, however, is far more multi-causal than that of Lubell. He takes ethnic considerations very much into account, but places them in a larger geographical and political framework.

The one danger with Professor Billington's article is that it may leave one with the impression that midwestern and American hostility toward and suspicion of Europe was a 20th-century phenomenon. D. Boorstin's essay, "America and the Image of Europe," *Perspectives USA*, XIV (Winter 1956), and his book *America and the Image of Europe* (New York, 1960), illustrate the long-standing American antipathy toward Europe and discuss changing attitudes in the 20th century. Equally important for an understanding of America's relations with the rest of the world is America's image of itself. H. N. Smith in his extremely important study *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, 1950), traces American thinking about its own west from Thomas Jefferson to Frederick Jackson Turner and argues that the widespread image of the west as a self-contained "Garden of the World" helped to foster and perpetuate "the doctrine that the United States is a continental nation rather than a member with Europe of an Atlantic community . . ." Other studies of aspects of American thought that had a formative influence upon its relations with Europe include D. M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago, 1954), and R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Chicago, 1955). C. Vann Woodward in his essay "The Age of Reinterpretation," *American Historical Review*, LXVI (Oct. 1960) 1-19, argues that 19th-century American isolationism was influenced by the pre-World War I system of what he calls "free security" whereby American interests were protected by the British fleet at no cost to the United States in either men or money. The breakdown of this system at the time of World War I, Woodward argues, has had a momentous influence upon American thought and action.

R. D. Leopold, "The Mississippi Valley and American Foreign Policy 1890-1941: An Assessment and an Appeal," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXVII (March 1951) 625-642, is a bibliographical discussion of the entire subject.

The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism

RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON

Through the nineteenth century the Middle West shared with the rest of the United States a lively interest in the world-wide struggle against tyranny.¹ Its people, living in what they liked to think was the cradle of democracy and invigorated by the influence of the frontier, regarded themselves as the patrons of the liberal uprisings that periodically rocked Europe; and they reacted accordingly. The Greek Revolt of the 1820's, the French Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the Hungarian struggle for independence in the late 1840's, all aroused the westerners to violent demonstrations of approval; fiery resolutions were adopted by mass meetings and legislatures, funds were collected to aid the revolutionists, and Congressmen were goaded into such violent speeches that they frequently embarrassed their neutral government.² Only a few of the more rabid midwesterners advocated American intervention in these European quarrels, but all paid enthusiastic lip service to each new blow struck at established authority.

In the first years of the twentieth century the western attitude shifted. The people of that section, above all others, insisted that Europe's fate was no concern of theirs; the United States, they said, should seek peace and security by isolating itself from the rest of the globe. This about-face was partly due to the changed relationships between the Old and New Worlds; for the shrinking Atlantic had brought the Americans uncomfortably close to an imperialistic, war-bound continent, and meddling now might mean actual involvement. Yet more than this was needed to explain the shift in

Reprinted from *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. LX, No. 1 (March 1945) 44-64 by permission of the *Political Science Quarterly*.

¹ The Middle West today comprises the areas defined by the Census Bureau as the East North Central and West North Central States: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. Missouri has remained predominantly southern in its social attitudes, but is included in the Middle West in this paper. See Howard W. Odum and Harry E. Moore, *American Regionalism* (New York, 1938), pp. 462 *et seq.*

² These activities are described in Myrtle A. Cline, *American Attitude toward the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1828* (Atlanta, 1930), pp. 62, 99-100; E. N. Curtis, "American Opinion of the Nineteenth Century French Revolutions," *American Historical Review*, XXIX (January 1924), 249-270; Arthur J. May, *Contemporary American Opinion of the Mid-Century Revolutions in Central Europe* (Philadelphia, 1927), pp. 49 *et seq.*; and in John W. Oliver, "Louis Kossuth's Appeal to the Middle West," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XIV (March 1928), 481-495.

midwestern ideology, for national security was not the only issue. The eastern and southern "militarists" of 1916, "internationalists" of 1919, and "interventionists" of 1940 were not concerned alone with preserving American nationalism through collective action; they believed that the eradication of Kaiserism, power politics and fascism was necessary to rid the world of anti-democratic institutions and ideals. The middle western "isolationists," although just as devoted to democracy, thought the rest of the world beyond redemption. These same people who in the nineteenth century had vigorously upheld universal self-government were in the twentieth content to protect their own treasures on their own soil.

This attitude became apparent during the chain of events leading to the Spanish-American War. The West's first reaction to the Cuban struggle for independence was true to the section's humanitarian traditions; westerners viewed the conflict as one between autocracy and self-rule which deserved their unwavering support. These sentiments were freely voiced in a number of mass meetings held during the fall of 1895 in middle western cities, where resolutions were passed favoring the immediate recognition of Cuban independence, government aid to Cuba, and even the American seizure of the island.³ Those whose enthusiasm was not satisfied by these outspoken demands collected funds to aid the revolutionists, a cause sponsored by the *Chicago Tribune* and imitated by other midwestern papers.⁴ Others joined the filibustering expeditions which were regularly launched against the Spanish rulers of Cuba. Chicago trade unions began contributing their men to this effort in the fall of 1895, and a year later a recruiting agent in Cincinnati reported that he had sent three hundred men from that city while a thousand had left from St. Louis and the entire Columbus, Ohio, contingent of the National Guard had offered its services.⁵ No other section contributed so generously to the cause of Cuban independence.

Equally indicative of the region's humanitarianism was the attitude of its press, although here a significant division occurred which was of great importance in explaining the West's shift to isolationism. While editors stood in a solid phalanx to support the Cuban cause, their belligerency varied with their political beliefs. At first Republican editors were markedly more aggressive than their Democratic rivals. Most outspoken of all was the Chi-

³ *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 1, 1895; *Cincinnati Tribune*, October 1, 1895; Marcus M. Wilkerson, *Public Opinion and the Spanish-American War* (Baton Rouge, 1932), pp. 56-60. At least eight of the twelve midwestern states participated in these meetings. Wilkerson, *op. cit.*, p. 57; *Chicago Tribune*, October 1, 1895; *Cincinnati Tribune*, October 8, 1895; *Congressional Record*, 54th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 32, 140, 482, *ibid.*, 2nd Sess., p. 230.

⁴ The campaign was started by the *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1896.

⁵ *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 7, 1895; *Cincinnati Times-Star*, December 15, 1896; Wilkerson, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

icago *Tribune*. As early as September 1895 it was saying: "Why do we wait longer? . . . Is it not time to say to Spain, 'Take your flag out of Cuba and give the people their liberty.' " A year later this paper urged the use of American battleships against the Spanish fleet and referred to war as something inevitable and desirable. By November 1896, the *Tribune* favored immediate recognition of Cuban independence, "and if Spain wants to go to war about it, the war will be a welcome one and she will get all the fighting she wants."⁶ This violent prowar attitude was matched by other Republican papers, nine of which favored the recognition of Cuban belligerency during 1895 and 1896, while seven advocated forceful annexation of the island.⁷

The election of McKinley in 1896 led to an immediate change of front. Although a few Republican papers, notably the *Chicago Tribune*, continued to demand war, the majority adopted a less belligerent tone. At the same time the Democratic press, although sympathetic to Cuba in the past, now grew more bellicose. Thus the Cincinnati *Enquirer* saw "no reason why Cuba should not be part of the United States within the next thirty days," the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* urged the use of the navy to protect our interests on the island, and the Omaha *World-Herald* branded as criminal McKinley's "dilly-dallying" attitude.⁸ These editors were willing to advocate intervention partly to embarrass the governing faction. Yet there was no doubt that the Middle West favored the war; six of the eight important independent papers there constantly advocated intervention, while even the business leaders showed less fear of war than industrialists in other sections.⁹

This pro-war sentiment was made clear to western Congressmen by a flood of petitions from legislatures, boards of trade, mass meetings and organizations. Of seventy-nine received by midwestern Senators, seventy-four favored the Cuban cause. Ten of these merely expressed sympathy, but twenty-eight demanded the recognition of Cuban belligerency, thirty-two asked the recognition of the island's independence, and three urged the United States to enter the war at once.¹⁰ Little wonder that the section's Congressmen played a leading role in the war party at Washington. Of the

⁶ *Chicago Tribune*, September 24, 1895, August 15, 1896, November 28, 1896. The quotations are from Wilkerson, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-50.

⁷ This is the conclusion of a careful student after a thorough study of the mid-western press during this period. George W. Auxier, *The Cuban Question as Reflected in the Editorial Columns of Middle Western Newspapers (1895-1898)* (Ann Arbor, University Microfilm, 1941), p. 244. This excellent work has been relied on for most of the material concerning the western press at this time.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 57, 151-152, 233. Dr. Auxier examined more than a dozen Democratic papers and found the shift in policy clearly marked in all but two.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 233; Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898* (Baltimore, 1936), pp. 234-244.

¹⁰ Compiled from petitions printed in the *Congressional Record* during this period.

twenty-four Senators from the Middle West, all but four voted or spoke consistently for intervention.¹¹ Some of the most warlike demands were voiced by westerners, who urged everything from "sending the most powerful battleship of the United States to Cuban waters," to "giving Cuba what Lafayette gave to Washington at Valley Forge."¹² When the vote on war was taken, eighteen of these twenty-four Senators sided with the majority who favored military intervention. In the House of Representatives, where the war resolution was adopted by a vote of 173 to 121, only twenty-five westerners opposed the war.¹³

Western interest in expansion did not decline when the nation, with the war won, debated the disposition of the conquered Spanish territory. President McKinley sought an answer to this problem by sounding public opinion on a speaking tour through the Midwest. Wherever he went his oratorical question, "Who will haul down the flag?" in the Philippines, was answered with shouts of "It will stay there." "I know what this means," he told a cheering crowd at Terre Haute. "It means, my fellow citizens, that the people of the United States want the victories of the army and navy to be recognized in the treaty of peace."¹⁴

McKinley, in his judgment, failed to note two significant variations in the section's opinion. One followed economic lines, for, although the business interests solidly supported expansion, the workers and farmers were less sure that this was desirable. The farmer-labor point of view was expressed by the president of the Ohio Federation of Labor who argued that, as civilization could not be transplanted, low wages would continue in the Philippines and the United States be flooded with cheap tariff-free goods to the detriment of the American worker. Moreover, the \$20,000,000 due Spain and the cost of developing colonial possessions promised higher taxes without immediate gain for the laborer or farmer.¹⁵ Western business men, on the other hand, caught a vision of vast Oriental markets for their goods

¹¹ This figure has been arrived at by a study of the Senate speeches made during the first two sessions of the 55th Congress, and by an analysis of the vote on resolutions authorizing the recognition of Cuban belligerence, Cuban independence, and actual intervention. *Ibid.*, 55th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 1394, 2nd Sess., pp. 3993, 4040-4041, 4079-4090.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1st Sess., pp. 1132, 1170.

¹³ The war resolution passed the Senate by a vote of 67 to 21. *Ibid.*, 55th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 4063, 4079-4080.

¹⁴ *Columbus Dispatch*, October 15 and 20, 1898. McKinley later declared that he based his decision to keep the Philippines partly on the enthusiastic response of western audiences to this suggestion. Quoted in Pratt, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-337.

¹⁵ *United Mine Workers' Journal*, December 8, 1898; *Ashland (Ohio) Press*, November 9, 1898; *Clermont (Ohio) Sun*, November 9, 1898; *Harrison County (Ohio) Democrat*, December 1, 1898; *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, quoted in *Literary Digest*, November 12, 1899. Western Congressmen received from farmers numerous petitions opposing expansion. *Congressional Record*, 55th Cong., 3rd Sess., pp. 1066-1067, 1157.

lying beyond the Philippine gateway. They stood solidly in support of McKinley's imperialistic inclinations and urged the retention of every inch of territory taken from Spain.¹⁶

A second and more important division in middle western opinion followed political lines. In the debate over expansion Republicans were wholeheartedly in favor of colonial possessions, Democrats unalterably opposed. Only Republican domination of the West accounted for that section's imperialism.

This division was reflected in the editorial opinion which filled western newspapers between 1898 and 1902. Republican editors saw colonial possessions as the panacea for all the nation's ills; from them would stem eternal prosperity, the prestige fitting a great nation, and enlightenment for down-trodden natives of tyranny-ridden lands. They supported the Treaty of Paris with its provisions for annexation, and urged a vigorous war upon Aguinaldo and his rebellious followers.¹⁷ The Democratic press, true to the section's established humanitarianism, saw expansion as a wicked conspiracy to steal possessions in the name of humanity, a sure prelude to participation in a world war, and the first step in the downfall of the Republic. Editors urged the defeat of the Treaty of Paris and looked upon Aguinaldo as a second Washington struggling for his people's liberty.¹⁸

These strict party lines influenced Congressmen more than did sectional attitudes. Democrats from the Middle West introduced resolutions against annexation, and heatedly declared that we should forsake McKinley imperialism and return to the principles of our Revolutionary forefathers who had fought to make a subject people free.¹⁹ Their pleas went unheeded. Republicans controlled the Middle West and assured that section's support of expansion. When the final vote on the Philippine act was taken, sixty-four midwestern Representatives favored American control of the islands and only twenty-three were opposed; in the Senate the vote stood nineteen in favor and three against.²⁰ The Middle West remained true to expansion-

¹⁶ Pratt, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-278, describes the conversion of this group. See also Bellaire (Ohio) *Herald*, August 11, 1898; Canton (Ohio) *Repository*, December 1, 1898; Clermont (Ohio) *Sun*, November 30, 1898; Columbus *Dispatch*, January 23, 1899.

¹⁷ Columbus *Dispatch*, October 3 and 5, December 14, 1898; Bellefontaine (Ohio) *Republican*, November 1, 1898; Ashland (Ohio) *Times*, November 2, 1898; Dayton *Daily Journal*, February 7, 1899; *Literary Digest*, November 18, 1898, February 4, 1899.

¹⁸ Bellaire (Ohio) *Herald*, July 28, 1898, August 25, 1898; Caldwell (Ohio) *Press*, November 10, 1898, December 8 and 22, 1898; Ashland (Ohio) *Press*, December 7, 1898; Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, January 5, 1899; Delaware (Ohio) *Democratic Herald*, January 5, 1899; Coshocton (Ohio) *Democrat*, January 9, 1899; Hocking (Ohio) *Sentinel*, October 19, 1899; Milwaukee *Journal*, Chicago *Chronicle* and St. Louis *Republic*, quoted in *Literary Digest*, October 28, 1899.

¹⁹ *Congressional Record*, 55th Cong., 3rd Sess., pp. 93, 1261, 1265, 1486, 1678.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 6231, 7487.

ism, but now its loyalties to the Republican Party transcended any idealistic beliefs.

Behind this shift in opinion, which was to hold the key to later western isolationism, lay both changing economic and social conditions in the West and the turbulent domestic situation of the 1890's. The latter was particularly important, for the ramifications of the free-silver crusade split the Middle West into two antagonistic camps and prepared both to adopt an insular attitude toward their nation's foreign policy. One of these groups was composed of the industrial-urban element which by 1900 was on the verge of wresting economic supremacy from the traditional agrarian rulers of the West. The other was made up of the farmers and workers who had seized on free silver as a panacea for the depression in which they had been bogged for a quarter-century.

The rabid enthusiasm of these agrarians profoundly shocked the members of the first group, the western business men and city dwellers. Bryan, to them, was the archetype of all that was bad; his path led to inflation, destruction of private property, and anarchy. McKinley, by contrast, was looked upon as the custodian of all that was good; a vote for him in 1896 or 1900 was not only a vote for sound business but also for civilization. The frantic efforts of these conservatives prevented Bryan from carrying the Middle West in either election, but the danger was too great to be forgotten. Any division within the party's ranks might open the door to Bryan and chaos; blind adherence to Republicanism on every issue would alone assure salvation. Hence when McKinley embraced the imperialistic cause, he swung a majority of midwestern Republicans with him. From that time on they shaped their views on foreign policy to that of their party's leaders. Any Democratic president who favored interventionism was certain to meet determined resistance from middle western Republicans.

The free-silver crusade also moved the powerful agrarian groups in the West along the path to isolationism. To them the defeat of inflation, which doomed them to a continuing struggle with poverty and debt, could be laid at the door of eastern and British capitalists. From this belief stemmed several prejudices which became entrenched in western thought. One was a dislike for England. Another was an intensified sectional antagonism which inclined farmers there to look with disfavor on anything sanctioned by easterners. Thus, if the East favored intervention in world affairs, they would automatically swing in the opposite direction. The third and most important prejudice was directed against eastern bankers and industrialists. This "money power" had been hated by the frontier since the days of Andrew Jackson, and now these hatreds seemed confirmed. Its wealth not

only had defeated inflation but had engineered imperialism, after the Spanish-American War, for its own selfish ends. These antagonisms were strengthened by the violent antitrust agitation of the Progressive era, and by the unfolding Caribbean policy which seemed to increase the poor man's taxes for the benefit of a few wealthy corporations. Thousands of westerners came to believe that intervention was only another tool of the trusts in their battle against the people.

The rapidly maturing industrial society of the Middle West also accounted for the section's changing opinion. Between 1880 and the turn of the century its manufactures increased threefold, until by 1900 the output of its 182,467 factories was valued at nearly four and a half billion dollars. Its agricultural products in the same year were worth nearly two and a half billion dollars.²¹ This happy combination of farm and factory created an economic self-sufficiency unrivaled by any other section. Its farmers were no longer dependent on foreign or eastern markets, and its manufacturers were less concerned with international trade, for they could sell most of their produce in the rural regions at their door. The West, enjoying the prosperity of rapid expansion as it developed into a self-contained economic unit, could close its eyes to the rest of the world as could no other section.

As important as these material factors in explaining the growing isolationism of the Middle West was the rise to political power of the section's immigrant population. For half a century its fertile lands had lured Europe's refugees until by 1900 more than half the male voters of every western state but Ohio, Kansas and Indiana were either foreign born or the children of parents born abroad; in Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota they numbered almost eighty per cent of the population, in South Dakota nearly seventy per cent, and in Michigan and Illinois sixty per cent. The nationality of these immigrants helped shape their attitude toward world affairs. Of the four million foreign born living in the section at the turn of the century, half came from Germany or neighboring states in Central Europe, while another six hundred thousand were from the Scandinavian countries.²²

The great mass of these first and second generation Americans favored isolation. Many retained a half-hearted loyalty to their Central European homelands; for, although they were but lightly touched by the upper-class nationalism of that day, they still disapproved of American entry into wars directed against the Central Powers. Others feared that participation in world politics would reawaken Old World hatreds and retard the process of

²¹ *Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900* (Washington, 1904), pp. 250, 331.

²² *Twelfth Census of the United States, Statistical Atlas* (Washington, 1903), Plate No. 46; *Abstract of the Twelfth Census*, pp. 58-63.

Americanization which was bringing them peace and prosperity. Still more, particularly among the foreign born, made the maintenance of their adopted country's democracy without essential change their principal political objective; and they shied with inherent conservatism from any deviation from the established courses. Finally, the second and third generations of newcomers developed an exaggerated Americanism as they hurried to slough off all Old World taints, and this too inclined them to look askance at entanglements which would revive influences they were anxious to leave behind. In general the immigrants were thoroughly conservative, particularly in the upper Mississippi Valley, and this fitted well with the pattern of isolationism.²³

Less important than these economic and racial factors, but still of some influence, were the large number of evangelical religious sects that were rooted in the Middle West. Many of these were avowedly pacifistic; others were European in origin and spread their cynical Old World doctrines among their worshipers. Thus, many of the Lutheran pastors were immigrants who brought to the United States both a hatred of war and a belief that Europe's conflicts were imperialistic struggles engineered by a few greedy capitalists.²⁴ Listening to these messages from the pulpit, the Scandinavians and Americans who followed this faith were influenced against any participation in the quarrels of the Continent.

These prejudices of alarmed business men, discontented farmers, immigrant voters, and pacifistic churchgoers were openly expressed between 1914 and 1917 when the nation debated its rôle in the first World War. The West's first reaction was one of thankfulness for its geographic isolation from a war that was considered "wicked, unnecessary and altogether horrible," and a fervent prayer of thanks that "we have gone no farther than we have in becoming a world power."²⁵ This complacency was easily translated into an indifference which was typified by the reply of a small-town policeman when asked, shortly after the *Sussex* sinking, what the people were saying about Germany: "Germany? Well, lessee. I reck'lect I *did* hear some of 'em talking some about Germany along five or six months ago, maybe, but I don't think there's been no talk about Germans for a good while lately. No sir, not around *our* community."²⁶ That this attitude was

²³ Marcus L. Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 77-96.

²⁴ George M. Stephenson, "The Attitude of Swedish Americans towards the World War," Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Proceedings*, X (July 1920), 79-94; *idem*, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (Minneapolis, 1932), pp. 451-452.

²⁵ Dayton *Daily News*, August 8, 1914; Springfield (Ohio) *Daily News*, July 31, 1914.

²⁶ Booth Tarkington, "Middle Western Apathy," *American Magazine*, LXXXIII (June 1917), 31-32. See also Cedric Cummins, "Indiana Looks at the War," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXXVII (December 1941), 343.

common was shown by a poll of newspaper editors in the fall of 1914. In the Middle West 122 were either indifferent to the outcome of the war or pro-German, while only 13 favored the Allies. This contrasted with the East, where 44 were neutral or pro-German and 34 pro-Ally, and the South with 56 neutral and pro-German editors against 47 supporting the Allies.²⁷

During the next two years this sectional attitude was clearly demonstrated in each issue that arose. Western opinion most violently opposed any increase in the army and navy, taking refuge in the belief that "preparedness brought on the war," and insisting that "our splendid isolation" made defense unnecessary.²⁸ This opposition was centered in the states west of the Mississippi where Populism had attracted most support²⁹ and was motivated partially by hatred of the eastern money trust. One Nebraska editor summed up the sentiment of his state when he charged the "preparedness-propagandists" with being in "the pay of the munitions-factory magnates and steel trust," and another insisted: "The terror which has seized Maxim and the manufacturers of war materials is not felt by the people of this section. There is no fear of invasion here."³⁰

This sentiment helped shape western opinion on the sale of military supplies to the warring Powers. Petitions favoring an arms embargo were showered on Congress from the beginning of the war, many of them from middle western communities with large German populations. "Better to have an embargo covering the entire coast," one editor wrote, "than to get into the war."³¹ Senator Kenyon of Iowa expressed the views of many of his constituents when, in presenting Congress with an embargo petition bearing a million signatures, he declared: "The jingle of the dollar can not drown the cry of suffering from the battle fields of Europe. It may be all right to sell these things according to international law, but it is against the moral law."³²

The western press did not react as violently to the German submarine campaign as did the editors of other sections. The only two papers to defend the sinking of the *Lusitania* were the *Milwaukee Free Press* and the

²⁷ *Literary Digest*, November 14, 1914.

²⁸ *Ohio State Journal*, November 21, 1914, February 3, 1915.

²⁹ This was revealed by a poll of newspaper editors published in the *Literary Digest*, March 11, 1916, which showed that sixty-six living west of the Mississippi saw militarism as a real danger while sixty-four did not. This was in marked contrast with other sections, such as the East where eleven feared militarism while eighty-five did not, or the middle western states east of the Mississippi whose editors voted twenty-three to sixty that such dangers were remote. This was also made clear by a large number of western petitions to Congress against increasing the size of the army and navy. *Congressional Record*, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 935, 1185, 1733, 2251, 2491.

³⁰ *Literary Digest*, March 11, 1916.

³¹ *Ohio State Journal*, February 7, 1915.

³² *Literary Digest*, February 12, 1916.

St. Louis *Times*, both located in areas with a large German population. Others, unwilling to go this far, insisted that Americans should hold themselves aloof by refraining from travel on belligerent ships, and that U-boats had as much right in American waters as British warships.³³ When Congress in 1916 acted on a resolution forbidding citizens to travel in vessels of warring Powers, twelve of the fourteen favorable Senate votes came from middle westerners, while that section's Representatives alone cast a majority of votes in its favor.³⁴ Probably a Kansas farmer mirrored the views of many of his fellows when he told an interviewer:

We will — every man of us — fight in a minute if the country is invaded, but we won't go a step farther. We'd keep every American off belligerent ships. We'd keep every American out of Mexico. We'd let the Japs take the Philippines and be damned, if they wanted 'em. We'd defend our homes, but when any American goes where he has no right to go, if he gets into trouble, it's his own fault. The honor of the country doesn't get outside our boundaries that we can see.³⁵

By the spring of 1917 the Middle West was no longer isolationist, for the opening of unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmerman Note solidified national opinion in favor of war. Yet in that section, as in no other, there remained a group of die-hards who resisted the popular clamor. When President Wilson asked Congress for authority to arm merchant vessels the resulting measure was talked to death by twelve Senators, eight of whom were from the West. Three of the five votes cast against the declaration of war in the Senate, and thirty-six of the fifty in the House, were from representatives of that section.³⁶ Hatred of the eastern money power, a large German population, and distrust of a Democratic president combined to center isolationism in the upper Mississippi Valley.

The important rôle of partisan politics in this attitude was again demonstrated when peace brought the League of Nations before the American public. The West's first reaction to Wilson's proposal was mildly favorable; even the Chicago *Tribune* admitted that "the scheme is not one which need be feared," and the equally isolationist Cincinnati *Times-Star* grudgingly conceded that the League "held promise to at least make wars less frequent."³⁷ A poll of newspaper editors in the spring of 1919 showed that

³³ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1915. An excellent summary of western attitude concerning the submarine question is in H. J. Haskell, "The U-53 and the Middle West," *Outlook*, October 1916, pp. 414-415.

³⁴ In the House the delegations from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin were unanimous in their approval. *Congressional Record*, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 3720.

³⁵ *Literary Digest*, February 12, 1916.

³⁶ *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 412-413.

³⁷ Chicago *Tribune*, February 17, 1919; Cincinnati *Times-Star*, April 29, 1919. See also *Literary Digest*, April 5, 1919.

250 of the section's papers were favorable, 200 conditionally favorable, and only 70 absolutely opposed.³⁸ Yet only four months later these western editors were vying in heaping calumny on the League, and western Senators were preparing to cast a virtually solid vote against it. This abrupt change of front was caused by the decision of Henry Cabot Lodge and his Republican followers to fight the League as a means of discrediting Wilson and the Democrats.

The predominantly Republican West fell readily into line with this partisan campaign to obscure the Covenant by amendments and reservations, while delaying the final decision until popular interest waned. For two months the treaty languished in the hands of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee while its friends pleaded with Wilson to accept reservations and the President retaliated by carrying the case to the people. When debate began, the cause was already lost, but Republican obstructionists were still cautious. Their attack, mild at first, mounted in intensity as passing months lessened League support. By mid-September even such a vacillating politician as Warren G. Harding felt sure enough of his constituents' isolationism to take a firm anti-League stand, while other western Senators were warning that internationalism meant rule by the dark-skinned peoples of the world, or by the Pope.³⁹ By this time, too, many moderate Republicans saw that Wilson would not compromise and reluctantly swung to complete opposition.

This increased bitterness in the Senate was reflected in the middle western press. As the summer progressed editors who had first favored the League turned gradually from cautious support to bitter attack. Some of the more outspoken, such as the *Chicago Tribune*, kept up a constant barrage of editorial invective and flagrant misrepresentation; others reflected a growing popular antipathy by refusing to print details of the wearisome Senate debate. Senator Lodge sensed this slump in public morale and in November agreed to a roll call on the fifteen reservations. In rapid succession they were taken up and passed, with the vote following rigid party lines.⁴⁰ With these reservations added, the treaty came before the Senate for final decision. Thirty-five Republicans and four Democrats recorded themselves as in favor, while forty-two Democrats and thirteen irreconcilable Republicans combined their votes to defeat the measure. Five of the thirteen irreconcilable votes were cast by midwestern Senators. A call for

³⁸ *Literary Digest*, April 5, 1919.

³⁹ *Congressional Record*, 66th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 235-237, 1436, 4453-4455, 5219-5225.

⁴⁰ Only one western Republican, Senator Porter McCumber of North Dakota, voted against two of the reservations; only Senator James Reed of Missouri deserted his Democratic colleagues to vote for them.

unconditional ratification of the treaty without reservations resulted in thirty-eight votes in favor and fifty-three opposed. Only one middle western Republican favored the League in this form, only one Democrat was opposed.⁴¹ Partisan politics, centered in the Republican Middle West, had struck a death blow at Wilson's idealistic internationalism.

The President, however, was unwilling to admit defeat. In January 1920 he referred to the coming election as a "great and solemn referendum" on the League of Nations and appealed to the people to repudiate Republican opposition at the polls. This challenge the Republicans refused to accept openly but their candidate, Warren G. Harding, was known for his anti-League stand, and most people understood that a vote for him was a vote against internationalism. The result was decisive. Harding was carried into office by a landslide vote that was particularly pronounced in the Middle West. Republican Senators from that section now outnumbered their Democratic rivals by 21 to 3, while the Democrats could salvage only 5 seats in the House to 138 for their rivals. Domestic issues were more important than foreign in this one-sided victory, but most of Harding's Middle West applauded when he declared in his victory speech: "You just didn't want a surrender of the United States of America; you wanted America to go under American ideals. That's why you didn't care for the League, which is now deceased."⁴²

With this pronouncement friends of internationalism turned to the Permanent Court of International Justice in their attempt to salvage at least something from Wilson's peace program. In theory, at least, adherence to the World Court was not a partisan issue, for both Harding and Coolidge were favorable, so long as they could attach reservations divorcing the Court from any League connections. Thus safeguarded, the protocols were presented to the Senate in March 1924. A few midwestern papers, headed by the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Kansas City Star*, leaped to the attack with all the avidity that had marked their campaign against the League,⁴³ but the more usual reaction was one of indifference or ignorance. Most papers ignored the important Senate debate in both their news and editorial columns, for the average western editor shared with the average western citizen the belief that such impracticable matters deserved little attention amid the booming prosperity of the 1920's. When the amended protocol was accepted by the Senate in January 1926 by a vote of seventy-six to seventeen, ten of the small opposition group were from the Middle

⁴¹ *Congressional Record*, 66th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 8767, 8803. McCumber voted for the League without reservations; Reed was opposed.

⁴² *New York Times*, November 5, 1920.

⁴³ *Chicago Tribune*, January 21, 23, 25, 27, 1926; *Kansas City Star*, April 29, 1925, January 9, 1926; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 2, 1926.

West, a disproportionate number which indicated the continued isolationism of the section.⁴⁴

When the reservations insisted on by the Senate proved unacceptable to the League Council, western editors shed no tears. "The reds, pinks and yellows may rave and try to change the situation," one declared, "but they will find . . . that the color combination loved by the citizenship of America is red, white and blue."⁴⁵ Statesmen, however, refused to give up hope of a formula that would be acceptable to both the League Assembly and the United States; they helped develop the Root Plan which was accepted by the League and submitted to the American government in 1929. Traditionally isolationist papers in the West looked upon this compromise with jaundiced eye, but President Hoover was sufficiently impressed to sound the state of public opinion on the thorny issue. A careful survey showed that sixty-six per cent of the people favored the World Court, while twenty-six per cent were opposed. Forty-one per cent of the opposition vote came from the Middle West — another indication of that section's isolationism. Yet two out of every three people favored adherence, and in December 1929 Hoover transmitted the protocols with the Root amendments to the Senate with a request for favorable action. They were referred to the Foreign Relations Committee where they remained until January 1935.

When at that time President Roosevelt urged their adoption a storm of protest arose from the Middle West. Congressmen and editorial writers hurled again the anti-Court barbs a decade old, and added others even more telling. Why, they asked, should the United States meddle in European affairs when so much economic reconstruction was needed at home? Why should the nation bother with a world drifting anew toward war when our reward for saving civilization in 1917 had been unpaid debts? Why should a depression-ridden country enmesh itself in the debased standards of the poverty-stricken Old World when millions of Americans were out of work?⁴⁶ As the time for a Senate vote neared, the isolationist fervor steadily mounted. Thousands listened to the Reverend Father Charles E. Coughlin, the rabble-rousing Michigan priest, whose pleas to radio listeners to wire their Congressmen swamped one Ohio newspaper with calls from persons asking the names of their Senators.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ In a proportional distribution these twelve states should have cast only five votes against the Court. *Congressional Record*, 69th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 2820.

⁴⁵ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 11, 1927. For similar comments see *Chicago Tribune*, February 11, 1927, and *Kansas City Star*, February 10, 1927.

⁴⁶ A number of western editorials against the Court are in *Congressional Record*, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 686-687. The same point of view is expressed by a petition from the Wisconsin legislature in *ibid.*, pp. 1296-1297.

⁴⁷ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 28, 1935.

The final vote showed fifty-two of the Senate in favor, thirty-six opposed. This was seven votes less than the necessary two-thirds, and the World Court was again, and finally, defeated. Thirteen of the thirty-six negative votes were cast by middle western Senators. Thus the resolution failed to secure even a majority vote from this section, while every other section was favorable by more than a two-thirds majority.⁴⁸ Partisan politics doubtless played some part in explaining the West's isolationism, for the Democratic origins of the Court and its endorsement by Roosevelt rankled some western Republicans. Ignorance and indifference, combined with post-war disillusionment and preoccupation with depression problems, were more important in shaping the opinion of the Middle West.

It was in this state of mind that westerners listened approvingly to the findings of the Nye Committee, solidly supported by the so-called neutrality legislation of the mid-1930's, and then smugly watched Europe drift toward war, certain that this struggle was no concern of theirs. Nor did the Munich settlement jar their complacency; for, while most agreed that war was now inevitable, they clung to the belief that the United States would surely remain aloof. A majority firmly opposed the attempted repeal of the arms embargo during the summer of 1939,⁴⁹ and applauded their congressional representatives who urged the people to "refrain from making the job of halting the drifting border sands of Europe a W. P. A. project for the relief of the unemployed millions of our American homes."⁵⁰ Only in this section, according to an Institute of Public Opinion poll in the fall of 1939, did a majority favor retention of the embargo on the shipment of arms abroad.⁵¹

Hitler's invasion of Poland and the outbreak of war did not materially change western opinion. When President Roosevelt called a special session of Congress to repeal the neutrality legislation he was opposed by a solid bloc of isolationist Congressmen from the Midwest. Some maintained that England and France were the aggressors and did not deserve aid; others that we would certainly be drawn into the war, or that repeal was favored

⁴⁸ The sectional division was more important than the political. Twenty Democrats deserted the administration to vote with fourteen Republicans and two Independents against the Court; forty-four Democrats and eight Republicans voted for adherence. A bloc of four western states, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa, cast no votes in favor, while every other state in the section supplied at least one negative vote, excepting Michigan, Indiana and Missouri. *Congressional Record*, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 1147.

⁴⁹ *Chicago Tribune*, August 24 and 25, 1939.

⁵⁰ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st Sess., Appendix, p. 3377. For other expressions of this sentiment by western Congressmen see *ibid.*, pp. 1144, 1573, 2025, 2687. Western petitions against repeal of the arms embargo are in *ibid.*, pp. 1144, 1573, 4516.

⁵¹ Repeal was favored by fifty-one per cent of the people of the East, sixty per cent of the southerners, fifty-one per cent of the Pacific coast residents, and only forty-seven per cent of the westerners. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, IV (March 1940).

only by munitions makers and international bankers "to sell guns to make a profit even if those guns bathe the earth in mothers' tears."⁵² When the final vote was taken in November 1939, the Middle West was the only section to cast a majority of its House votes against repeal. In only two western states, Illinois and Missouri, did a majority favor revision; in the four states of Wisconsin, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota the entire delegation voted for retention. While a slim majority of midwestern Senators opposed the embargo, in no other section was the vote so close. The important rôle of partisan politics was indicated by the fact that only two of the West's thirty-five Representatives who voted for repeal were Republicans.⁵³

The next months witnessed a rapid shift of American opinion as the fall of Norway, the Low Countries and France brought home the dangerous position of the United States. Some westerners concluded that this demonstration of Axis strength showed the futility of opposition and increased their demands for complete neutrality, but a larger number decided that American preservation depended on greater aid for the democracies and the increase of our own defenses.⁵⁴ Yet even now the West lagged significantly behind other sections. In June 1940 a poll of its people showed that, while fifty-seven per cent of them favored peacetime conscription, sixty-eight per cent of the rest of the nation thought this step necessary.⁵⁵ When this issue was presented to Congress in the Burke-Wadsworth Selective Service Act the middle westerners in both House and Senate cast a majority of their votes in opposition, while every other section was favorable. Michigan, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota gave the measure no support, and only one Representative each from Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota and Indiana voted in favor. Again the rôle played by partisan politics was shown when only one midwestern Republican in the House and one in the Senate backed the administration bill.⁵⁶

⁵² *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 1306. For a convenient summary of isolationist argument during this debate see *New Republic*, May 18, 1942.

⁵³ Only nine Democrats deserted their party to join the solid Republican bloc for the embargo. In the House the eastern states voted 53 to 37 for revision, the southern 102 to 5, the Pacific states 23 to 9, and the middle western 35 to 73. In the Senate the East voted 12 to 6 for revision, the South 27 to 4, and the Middle West 13 to 11. *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 1024, 1389.

⁵⁴ For a convenient summary of western editorial opinion on this subject see *What America Thinks* (Chicago, 1941).

⁵⁵ *Public Opinion Quarterly*, IV (September 1940).

⁵⁶ The Middle West cast 84 votes against and 23 in favor. In the East conscription was favored by a vote of 70 to 21, in the South 103 to 3, and in the Far West 20 to 12. In the Senate the West voted against compulsory service 14 to 7, while the East was in favor 14 to 3 and the South 28 to 2. *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 3rd Sess., p. 11142.

These sectional lines did not waver during the critical spring of 1941 when Congress debated the Lend-Lease Bill. Although national opinion was now almost solidly behind the President, a few die-hards fought to the bitter end. In the vanguard were a number of western Congressmen and the *Chicago Tribune* — which hailed the passage of the act in March 1941 with banner headlines proclaiming “Senate Passes Dictator Bill.” “Sinister and suspicious demands for dictatorship powers,” “the complete abdication of Congress,” “a war bill, a dictatorship bill, a bankruptcy bill” — these were phrases used by midwesterners in their attack. Nor did the final vote show any change in sectional alignment. Again the West, alone among the sections, cast a majority of its votes against Lend-Lease in both House and Senate.⁵⁷ On this last important issue before the bombs that fell on Pearl Harbor substituted action for debate the Middle West remained true to its isolationist tradition.

From this survey certain conclusions seem obvious. The western swing to isolationism coincided with the free-silver excitement, which solidified political divisions and intensified sectional jealousies. From that date the Middle West viewed with suspicion the extension of American interests beyond the seas, partly because Democratic presidents were largely responsible and partly because interventionism was favored by eastern bankers and corporations. Important, too, in shaping that attitude were the large numbers of first and second generation Americans who lived in the upper Mississippi Valley: Germans who disliked to make war on the Fatherland and Scandinavians who brought from the Old World a strong tradition of isolationism. These national attitudes were bolstered by the religious concepts of the many evangelical sects which flourished in the West. Humanitarianism and missionary zeal enlisted their support for the Spanish-American War, but their pacifism inclined them against participation in the wars of Europe.

These prejudices and attitudes, bolstered by the sense of security which stemmed from the section's geographic position and economic self-sufficiency, help to explain middle western isolationism. More conservative than the rest of the nation, the West clung to nineteenth-century traditions after other regions had recognized the inevitability of a New World rôle for the twentieth-century United States.

⁵⁷ The debate is summarized in the *New Republic*, May 18, 1942. In the House the Middle West voted against Lend-Lease 94 to 41. The East favored the measure 71 to 40, the South 120 to 5, and the Far West 21 to 20. Middle western Senators voted 14 to 8 against the bill. In the East the vote was favorable by 11 to 6, in the South 29 to 1, and in the Far West 12 to 10. *Congressional Record*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 2097, 2229.

THE AMERICAN INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE 'THIRTIES

Not the least interesting phenomenon of post-World War II America is the almost total decline of a viable political Left in the United States. "Radical" has become an appellation increasingly applied more to the extreme Right than to its opposite. (See the essays in D. Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* [Garden City, 1963], especially S. M. Lipset, "Sources of the Radical Right in America.") The Communist party and a variety of Socialist parties continue to exist, but they have become increasingly bereft of members, finances, and hope. (See D. Shannon, *The Decline of American Communism* [New York, 1959]). To understand this decline it is necessary to examine not only the angry and at times hysterical reaction that followed the disruption of the Soviet-American wartime alliance and the inception of the Cold War, but the decade that preceded the war as well; a decade that, for the Left at least, began in hope and ended in disaster. Never again was it to have as much force, appeal, or prospect.

The Left not only failed to benefit in any meaningful way from the mass privation, inequalities, and unemployment of the 'thirties, it actually emerged from the depression decade in a far weaker condition than it had entered it. The Socialist party had fewer members in 1937 than it had at the party's birth in 1901. Though the Communist party's membership grew in the 'thirties, this increase was due more to the party's support of the New Deal during the Popular Front honeymoon than to any policy of militant, revolutionary action. In any case, its membership never exceeded 100,000, hardly a formidable number. Much of the Left's thunder was stolen by various right-wing groups, which had a larger following and wider appeal during the 'thirties than any Leftist organization — a fact that still needs explanation. (On these groups see M. Janowitz, "Black Legions on the March," *America in Crisis*, D. Aaron, ed., 305-325, and W. Stegner, "The Radio Priest and His Flock," *The Aspirin Age*, I. Leighton, ed., [New York, 1949] 232-257.) The material and psychological successes of the New Deal, which, as Norman Thomas quipped, carried the Socialist party's platform out — on a stretcher, also greatly weakened the Left.

These external factors, however, were no more important than the internal weaknesses from which the major Leftist organizations suffered. A number of these are discussed in the article by Daniel Bell (p. 332, above). The intense factionalism, always characteristic of

the Socialist party, reached a peak in the 'thirties. A group of labor leaders and intellectuals broke with the Socialists to form the American Labor party; additional factions split off, either to join other Leftist organizations or to lapse into political quietude; a large group of Trotskyites entered the party in the late 'thirties and before departing helped to accelerate the process of internal disruption. All this, of course, left the party weak, demoralized, and frequently incapable of action. The Communist party was troubled less by factionalism than by a number of important and embarrassing policy gyrations that were determined more by the needs of the Soviet Union than by the realities of the situation in the United States. The most important of these sudden shifts is discussed by Norman Holmes Pearson, who teaches English at Yale University, in the article that follows.

But Professor Pearson does more than merely point out one of the elements that helped to blunt the Communist appeal in the depression years. In an era in which it has become common to denounce as pseudo-intellectuals, frustrated elitists, or simple-minded dupes those writers, artists, and intellectuals who found the extreme Left attractive, Pearson describes their actions with sensitivity and insight, speaking not only of the objective conditions that surrounded them but also of the literary and intellectual traditions in which they matured and worked. That so many literary, artistic, and intellectual figures of note found Communism the only, or at least the best alternative during the depression, calls for understanding rather than epithets; and this Professor Pearson attempts to supply. An equally penetrating analysis may be found in D. Aaron's essay, "A Decade of Convictions: The Appeal of Communism in the 1930's," *Massachusetts Review*, II (Summer 1961) 736-747, and his larger work, *Writers on the Left* (New York, 1961). For a much different and less sympathetic picture, see L. Filler, "Political Literature: A Post-Mortem," *Southwest Review*, XXXIX (Summer 1954) 185-193.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact and the End of a Dream

NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON

To look back upon history is inevitably to distort it. As Ambrose Bierce morosely snarled: "God alone knows the future, but only an historian can alter the past." Bierce may have regarded historians as bumblerers of facts. We may view them simply as contrivers of necessary fictions that are the

only approximate means we have for understanding yesterdays. The data historians choose from the web of events are usually those which lead directly to outcomes they already know. The tone they give is the tone they wish. The nearer we are to the present, the more difficult is the choice of material, since the less we can be sure that there are any true or discernible conclusions to form structures against. There are only steps (and many false ones) along the way to the uncertainties of an indeterminate future. The present is at least as difficult to assess as either the past or the future. It is as difficult to understand and to plan. That is why there are crises in the present, have been crises in the past, and unquestionably will continue to be crises in the future. They are the results of general failures of assessment. Yet in the necessity for making assessments, each of us is always a practicing fictionalist, whether or not we indite. We share in the process, and if we learn nothing else from the history of crises we may perhaps learn a decent humility in regarding them.

Such a crisis was the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939, which brought an end to the decade that had begun with the depression, and joined enemy to apparent friend in a confusion of loyalties that shattered the confidence of many writers. Today, the strong friendship with Russia in the 1930's seems somehow inexplicable to a generation whose mature life is a matter of years since World War II. Other factors have intervened to create a new situation, altered allegiances, and even new crises. What occurred then took place in a different scene. Regarded solely from the present, the affinities of the thirties appear in a sometimes dismal light; when they are looked at in terms of what had preceded them, a different tone prevails. For the writers of the thirties had a special conditioning and worked by values that first led them into such sympathies and then away. The values remained. What is now needed is an understanding of the impulsions.

Behind most writers lies their tradition, and there is much about the American tradition which is ambiguous, even paradoxical. It is a remarkable characteristic of the American psyche that, no matter how externally confident we may appear, we are always examining ourselves before mirrors, and our self-chosen classics of American writing are chiefly self-critical. Just as we are constantly discontented with our mechanical technologies and seek to improve upon them even at the cost of retooling, so we seek the same opportunity and find the same necessity with our nation and with our egos. Just as we seek for the truth of process so we seek for the truth of self.

Something of this self-consciousness may be charged to a persistent psychology of national and personal adolescence. We are told, and tell ourselves, that we are a young nation. We live in a constant puberty, with our

voices changing. We grope our way, like adolescents, without any easy confidence of acceptance as equals in a mature world. Such behavior may appear gauche, but it is also a source of strength, since our awareness of our youth encourages change and the possibility of change, and keeps us from an easy acceptance of things as they are simply because they are as they are. Progress for us is a continued disruption of the status quo, and our sense of immature youth gives us the energy, the daring, and the freedom for progress.

Yet the malaise goes deeper than mere awkwardness, and does not altogether find its compensation in the fact of achievement. The achievement always seems partial. There is an exhilaration in the process of "becoming," but there is a definable tension that comes from never arriving at the ideal stage that we envision. Americans are a race of sad young men because they dream of ideals without being able to achieve them in any absolute sense. Any momentary achievement is always overclouded by the further possibilities. Satisfaction is blended with unrest. The history of the American race shows how much has been altered for good; but when so much remains still to be done, the failure to accomplish it nourishes anguish. Such frustration accompanying such hope is a paradox of youth and Americans.

We have only to look briefly at American literary classics to see how dominant self-criticism has been. A substantial shelf of Cooper's books exist that scold Americans and American ways as severely as Sinclair Lewis was ever to do. Even Cooper's Natty Bumppo turned his primitive back on the increasingly dominant culture-patterns. Cooper felt such criticism to be his responsibility and a proper function of fiction. He was, as his literary ancestor Cotton Mather had put it, his brother's keeper as well as his own; and Cooper's books like Mather's were meant to do good. A cliché of consolation for us in many circumstances comes from a conviction that bitter medicine is administered for our own good. The criticisms of our materialistic way of life which Thoreau made in *Walden* are obvious, and still, we feel, pertinent. Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn took to the river rather than the shores of the Mississippi, as Thoreau had taken to the pond. Huck hit out even farther at the end. "I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and civilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before." The conclusion was more than comic; the book involved more than the ways of juveniles. Hawthorne's novel, *The House of the Seven Gables*, was an attack on the greed for property; and *The Marble Faun* a discussion of aspects of American immaturity. One does not have to read far in Melville to find characterizations of distrust. The preoccupation of Henry James with American cultural deficiencies was constant. Even Whitman pleaded for what was still latent rather than altogether realized. Yet none of these writers could be said not

to have loved America; they were goading her toward the achievement of an ideal.

The writers of the 1930's were essentially the group who had been writing in the decade after World War I. One understands them as well by what they read as by what they wrote. An aspect of the 1920's was its awareness of such a literary tradition of self-criticism, and a certain dignity accompanied the writer who was willing to stand up against public criticism and complacency in order to point out the truths. Into the family of American classics, the intellectuals of the twenties adopted two books; and the adoption showed characteristics of the decade. One was *The Education of Henry Adams*; the other was Melville's *Moby Dick*.

The Education of Henry Adams was a depiction of shared plight, of isolation, of man's uneasiness and uncertainty, and of his agonized effort to understand himself, his heritage, and his age. The figure of Adams himself emerged as a Hamlet *de nos jours*: the prince who had been deprived of succession to kingship, who is in danger of being overcome by too much intellectualization and unable to adjust himself to a decayed court, yet persists in his education as though, even were the conclusions intolerable, the very achievement of them were an act of moral rectitude. One can hardly understand the tone of Adams's autobiography unless one reads it in the light of the implicit belief of Americans in the value of education. From the beginnings of the country there has been this reliance. From education comes the possibility of an enlightened electorate, the enlightened technologist, and the enlightened son of God. Henry Adams equates education with its goal, which is understanding. If there is no final understanding there has been, on these terms, no education. But this is really little more than to say that one has not been graduated; and for Americans the final examinations come only, if ever, at death. Yet Adams, in actual fact, was like most Americans and did believe in education as a process as well as an end. He uses the word in the sense both of attaining and of attainment. He relinquished neither meaning. He was always educating himself, and the goal was knowledge, not simply as a trophy but as an applicable science of history, which would serve as a technology of truth. "Any science of history must be absolute," he said, "and must fix with mathematical certainty the path which human society has got to follow." When Adam says "the path which human society has got to follow," he means it as an imperative only because it is the path of truth, which to the educated will be irresistible because it can be recognized through reasonable demonstration. Truth as a goal, and reason as a method, have been American tenets. If for Adams truth was in the world's decline, he was dignifying his countrymen by deem-

ing them capable of being trained to a maturity that could bear the burden of pessimism.

In the literary myth, the figure of Adams was blended by T. S. Eliot into the Gerontion of "a dry month, being read to by a boy, waiting for rain." "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" Eliot said of the situation. A Gerontion was incapable of action. "What will the spider do, suspend its operations, will the weevil delay?"

If [Adams had said in 1894 in speaking of his construction of history] an hypothesis is advanced

that obviously brings into a direct sequence of cause and effect all the phenomena of human history, we must accept it, and if we accept it we must teach it. The mere fact that it overthrows social organization cannot affect our attitude. The rest of society can reject or ignore, but we must follow the new light no matter where it leads.

Such a light might seem to lead underground.

But Gerontion was only a facet of the psyche rather than the whole of it. Too much has been made of the "lostness" of the twenties, and too little of the spiritual daring, which was equally characteristic. The decade supplied a complementary answer to despondency by its admiration of Melville's Captain Ahab, whom it saw as a man of indomitable will, going gallantly even to death in his attempt to harpoon evil in the destructive body of the whale itself.

One way of expressing the indomitable will was through a reliance on youth, and the romantic powers of natural man. There was a freshening of the value of the romantic ego. The "mimic hootings" of Wordsworth's nature boy of Winander were being given new and blatant tones in the blare of the saxophone. The more "natural" one could become by casting aside encrusted hides of convention (tonal or otherwise) the closer one came to a modern adaptation of the state of Rousseau's primitive hero. Harlem became a convenient jungle in which inhibitions could be cast aside. To violate Prohibition was to assert one's natural freedom from legislation, and the recovered cocktail took on a sacramental glow. Sexual liberty became an asset, if for no other reason than that whatever was instinctive was right. Conventions were clichés of behavior, whose truth investigation denied. One of the characters in Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* put the social case for the truth of reality:

Everything would be so much better if suddenly a bell rang and everybody told everybody else honestly what they did about it, how they lived, how they loved. It's hiding things makes them putrefy.

Suddenly the bell had rung, and writers became bell-ringers. But it was not simply for the hullabaloo of clanging, though different ears heard it differently. It was a moral summons for the individuals to take out papers of naturalization.

Such a spiritual daring might lead to initial martyrdom at the hands of Philistines, who like whales took vengeance; but in the attempt lay the only hope for the destruction of sham, which by its deceitful nature was an evil. All this was in the sense of a dedication to the discovery of truth, based on the knowledge that even "whiteness" could not be accepted at surface appearance. Surface appearances had been profoundly altered since the previous century, though the public was not always quick to see what had happened. The scientific method, applied in various fields of knowledge, had toppled hitherto accepted definitions in physics, economics, politics, law, society, and religion. Secrets of the consciousness and subconsciousness of man had been laid bare. Writers, following this impulse and sharing in the dignity of scientists, were equally concerned with redefinitions in their attempts to deal with the description and analysis of life. Craftsmanship as a goal in writing was another aspect of the necessity for scientists to describe accurately the material they were dealing with. Truly accurate description in writing might, as Gertrude Stein had discovered in her portrayals of consciousness, lead to a rejection of established syntax. As science brought all data into the open as worthy of analysis, so writers broke down the barriers of censorship that inhibited subject-matter. The public's objections had nothing to do with the writer's necessity for presenting truth. Eventually, as writers knew, the public would come to accept it; because the public too, though more slowly than scientists or writers, believed as essentially in truth. Like Mather and Cooper, these moderns also were writing essays to do good. When a Hemingway character "was embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain," as he famously put it, and was out after the "concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates," he was acting in the scientific spirit that pursued truth. What Hemingway was not doing — though many asserted that he was — was carelessly tossing aside the concept of values. He was simply examining, as though the world were his laboratory, the silken or iron curtains of slick words that halted the vision of reality. He was also following a principle of free inquiry that gave him a right to express his conclusions. By his actions he was himself exemplifying a value.

On every side the privilege of free inquiry was maintained, with those unabashed questionings after what is really true which are characteristic of

more than Congressional committees. Congressmen, after all, act for their constituents. An at least quasi-scientific method had gone into a general examination of such an overwhelming phenomenon as World War I. By one investigator after another, unrecognized economic factors were shown to exist alongside the urgencies of such idealistic slogans as H. G. Wells's phrase "the war to end war." Events during and after the war made such slogans seem little more than sham. But behind the irony that in histories, novels, and poems attacked the factual validity of the slogans lay a yearning belief in their ambitions. Irony, as Ezra Pound remarked, is never negative, because it always posits an ideal which has been corrupted. Pragmatic concepts notwithstanding, idealism has played a dramatic role, either as protagonist or antagonist, in the American drama of contradictions. Relief could have been found for the tensions. All that was required of American writers was that they relinquish their values. This would have brought a lethargic and blinded contentment. But the values were too deeply ingrained, and the greatest enemy was inertia.

Something of the temper of the postwar years is to be found in an excerpt from an unpublished letter from William Rose Benét to his younger brother, written in November of 1919. Benét was working for a Washington journal known as *The Nation's Business*. "Dear Steve," he wrote:

This industrial situation makes me alternately feel Bolshevik and then just oh-what-the-hell's-the-use. This job is a good money-making job, but every once in so often I want to take the boat to Russia. I hate the way most things are going in this country and I am so damned tired of all this Americanization stuff I can hardly see straight. I have no illusions about the white purity of the working man, but the way these conferences have gone, and the attitude of the coal barons, and the [Versailles] Treaty all bitched to hell, and the League [of Nations] not even a ghost of itself — well, it seems to me as if all the world were ruled by mere stupid standpatness that just sits and sits and merely grunts when an idea comes along.

Here were the uneasinesses that the 1930's were to heighten for so many writers.

The bell that *Manhattan Transfer* had called for as a summons to truth began to toll like a tocsin in late October of 1929, when the stock market crashed. Before the month was over fifteen billion dollars in market value had been lost. By the end of the year, the total was "an estimated forty billion." It was not too long afterwards, as history goes in time, when on the 6th of March, 1933, the "bank holiday" was declared, and with it the inviolability of economic clichés was shattered. Whatever else happened,

it was now obvious that the old reliances no longer obtained, and that more and more people were beginning to realize this. What had seemed chiefly an ideological dilemma now became a dilemma in fact.

The succession of shocks was overwhelming. It was not simply an American situation that was witnessed. In England had come the "dole"; in Germany, such a dislocation of economy that youth having finished college had chiefly the choice between learning to play in the band of a cheap café or drinking vermouth and plotting to migrate. In Germany there was at least action. The Nazi Party began to emerge, following the Italian precedent; and the same emotionally and physically hungry ones went to its rallies as attended the meetings of the Communists. Over the speakers' stands at both, the same appealing banner hung: *Arbeit und Brot* (Work and Bread). But Hitler's stentorian nationalism was louder, and the roll of kettledrums boomed a more intoxicating rhythm when the Führer strode, arms folded across his brown-shirted breast, through public halls filled with men whose palms were outstretched to touch a swastika'd savior.

Something was needed. As the troubled memory of writers played back over the episodes from the first World War to the Great Depression and afterwards, they could not help but be impressed by the absence of order and the lack of any binding ethics. There was only confusion. By 1932 at the Conference of Lausanne a despairing end was made to the frenzied financing by which American capital, depending upon a complacent view of its own powers, had lent money to Germany. By means of it, and while American capital winked, Germany had partly built up a new war potential and partly repaid reparations to countries that continued, by its means, to float their own American loans. By the summer of 1933 the flags flew at half-mast over the University of Berlin in mourning for the Versailles Treaty. Circles of young Nazis replaced the clustered *Studentenkorps* before the doors of learning. By now Germany was receiving apologies, and reviving young Germans were saying sometimes that the war had been lost by bad generalship, and anyhow that it was nothing for which their generation was responsible. Yet there was still little but sitting and grunting on the part of those others to whom the dangers of such a situation should have been obvious. No one seemed to listen to warnings. Japan, taking advantage of European confusion, had already in 1931 commenced her series of aggressions in Manchuria, but economic sanctions under the League Covenant were withheld because of the danger to British investments in Shanghai. No lessons had been learned from the first war. When it came time in 1935-6 for Mussolini to strike his fasces into Ethiopia, the same lack of principles prevented opposition. By the time of the Spanish War in 1936-9, the League of Nations was dead, not only because America had never joined

in its initial idealism but also because Europe and Great Britain apparently did not want it either. From the moment in 1934 when Mussolini had marched his troops to the Brenner Pass to prevent Hitler from annexing Austria, and thousands waited at European radios for the news that war had been declared, it was only a question of time before, somewhere in the confusion, absolute calamity would break out. It did break out in Spain, when Germany and Italy ostentatiously used the peninsula as a practice ground. But even their bombings of civilians at Guernica and Barcelona could not overcome economic timidity. The word "time" had never seemed so important to those who desired to take measures against disorder.

Had there been anything like mutual good-will among nations in trying to work out on a truly rational basis any technologies for remedying situations, some progress towards order might have been made. A new force, however, had emerged, for which most American writers were ill prepared, but which they recognized for what it truly was long before its full significance was generally felt. This was Hitlerism as a positive force of deceit and evil. It had its testament in *Mein Kampf* and its affidavits in the slaughter of the Jews. To writers who believed not in the essential depravity of man but in his innate goodness, Nazi brutalities on street corners and in concentration camps acted not so much to change their belief as to rally them together against what was for the first time a common antagonist. Alongside such a foe, the earlier skirmishes of American writers in the twenties against Philistinism became trivial. But unless the values that had prompted them before were to be now relinquished, then they served as a basis for resistance against this more formidable opponent. The importance of demonstrating truths about a narrow range of local society became even greater in terms of the ubiquitous nature of Fascism. Echoes of Fascist-mindedness in America itself made Europe's problem one to be shared by us if we were not to be touched by the same cancer. That there was an indifference to the reception of truth was only an aspect of history repeating itself. Writers followed a moral imperative.

More and more the temper of writers had been altered. A dominantly personal ethic, as James Farrell was to point out, had shifted to a dominantly social ethic. Today when we wish to praise a book or insinuate unsuspected virtues in it, we say that it is basically religious. In the 1920's critical praise was reserved chiefly for originality and vitality and craftsmanship, with a premium for telling the truth. This was an expression of the morality of individualism. It was the individual who must be saved, and through his regeneration might come the regeneration of society. But in the 1930's the praise increasingly came for a book's social awareness or relevance, as though society could be directly manipulated and controlled. This

was an expression of a developing sense of group involvement, and of the state as something separate from man. Under these circumstances the state was still man's servant. It was only later in America that the state began to be thought of as man's master or at least superior, and one could refer to such concepts as that of the state's duty to man. More and more as the 1930's developed, the role that a book can play in terms of social influence was recognized. Through his books, the writer could become a kind of social engineer, molding and reforming. This possibility of playing an active part in society gave writers and their books a new dignity, for they were now more than critical observers.

Against such forces of evil as the Spanish War, presented both actually and representationally, there was a sense of a literary crusade with a tangible objective. The Spanish War seemed to represent a moment in history which drew together the disturbing strands of tendencies that writers opposed. To join forces, whether by actual enlistment in such a group as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, or by writing as social engineers, was to oppose moral inertia. Expressed in Hemingway's highest rhetoric in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the Spanish War offered

a part in something which you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. . . . Your own death seemed of complete unimportance; only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty. But the best thing was that here was something you could do about this feeling and this necessity too. You could fight.

There were various ways of fighting and feeling, and most writers used words, which were their special weapons. They were working for peace, or at least for the achievement of an equilibrium on which organized peace could be maintained not by any balance of power but by the eventual coming together of rational minds, working in terms of common values and dedicated to truth and freedom. What they had learned was that nothing could be accomplished by doing nothing. They had come to know that active forces of evil must be actively opposed. "The point is clear enough," Archibald MacLeish said in an address:

Those who fight against fascism are not fomenting war for the simple reason that the war is already fomented. The war is already made. Not a preliminary war. Not a local conflict. *The* war: the actual war: the war between the fascist powers and the things they could not destroy. Spain is no political allegory. Spain is not, as some would have us think, a dramatic spectacle in which the conflict of our time is acted out. These actors are not actors. They truly die. These cities are not

stage sets. They burn with fire. These battles are not symbols of other battles to be fought elsewhere at some other time. They are the actual war itself. And in that war, that Spanish war on Spanish earth, we, writers who contend for freedom, are ourselves, and whether we so wish or not, engaged.

What was important was the objective, which was the crushing of the evil of Fascism. Mr. MacLeish's speech was made at the second Congress of American Writers in the summer of 1937. The first Congress had been held in 1935. As a chapter in American literary history, such gatherings, sponsored by names like those of Hemingway, Erskine Caldwell, Kenneth Burke, Malcolm Cowley, Theodore Dreiser, James T. Farrell, Horace Gregory, Lewis Mumford, and John Dos Passos, to name only an important few, were the first times when a substantial body of serious, though diversified, writers had come together with a sense of unity. Such gatherings were startling substitutions for those of the 1920's at the tables of the Dôme Café in Paris, but the functions of the two locales were not entirely unlike in serving the satisfaction for writers of being together with something in common. An un-Philistine idealism played a part at both meeting-houses. The sense of the importance of freedom of inquiry and a desire to reach toward truth were part of both. Only now the enemy was not intangible bigotry but tangible evil.

The political collapse of Europe, as Professor Hajo Holborn has called his newly published history of events, continued with increasing momentum. No matter what ennobling idealism the League of Nations may originally have represented, the League itself came tumbling down. The Spanish Civil War kept Europe busy from 1936 to 1939, while Hitler grew strong. In 1936 the Rhineland was remilitarized. In the same year the Rome-Berlin Axis was established. By 1938 the annexation of Austria was achieved. Mussolini hurried this time only to be photographed at Hitler's side. In September of the same year came the pivotal Treaty of Munich, which, through Chamberlain's efforts at appeasement, gave Hitler the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, and eventually Czechoslovakia itself. Not even the United States, which through Wilson had helped to establish Czechoslovakia, made any tangible protest, though there were shudderings of nausea. Poland, which had once been freed like Czechoslovakia, put in a stained thumb for plums of territory, as though unaware of what greed would do against herself as the power of evil grew. The Spanish War ended as a failure for democratic values; the evils of Hitlerism had continued to flourish. The fiber of Europe was disintegrating.

But if during these years of the 1930's there was to be no effective formal association of nations to oppose what was increasingly evil, then at least

there could be an informal association of right-minded peoples within nations, who could act together as a coercive force. They could form a protesting, if unauthorized, united front against a common enemy. As writers, when such was their skill, the people could continue to push aside the shams and false words and expose truth for truth. This was a goal; for American writers, joining such a movement, still retained their belief that truth, once revealed, would eventually triumph. That was perhaps their chief morality. So great was the force of the enemy that to join in opposition seemed in itself to be an affidavit of integrity.

The United Front as a name as well as an idea had been established in the summer of 1935, when the Third International decided that the U.S.S.R. would support democracies against the common Nazi enemy, and that Communists in countries other than Russia should support even bourgeois local governments. The role of the Communist Party in the United States, which had been established in 1919, took on aspects of third-party protests that had long been a part of American politics, and whose strength came not so much through their own electoral victories as through their pressure on more established parties.

It was in the name of a united effort that the first American Writers' Congress was called together in 1935. Few who attended had any illusions about whether or not the American Communist Party, acting in the spirit of the Third International, was sponsoring the Congress. Many realized that the Congress had been developed at least partly to replace the John Reed clubs, which had been taken over by the Trotskyites. But the prevalent attitude of writers, not actually themselves involved in frictions within the Party, was that which MacLeish was to express for the laymen at the second Congress in 1937 in relation to the Spanish War. He was talking about those who felt "that the fascist issue is in actual fact nothing but a private squabble between fascism and communism, of no concern to anyone but the partisans, and of ulterior and purely factional concern to them." "The answer is, of course," Mr. MacLeish went on:

that the man who refuses to defend his convictions for fear he may defend them in the wrong company, has no convictions. The further answer is that this fear of being used, this phobia of being maneuvered is itself a very curious thing. There is, to my mind, something about it unpleasantly squeamish and virginal — something indecently coy. Even if the danger of rape exists the tender spirit need not necessarily submit. Why *should* a man be "used" unless he pleases? Why should he not himself become the "user"? If a liberal really believes in the freedom of the mind and person which he protests, he will defend them against all comers and in any company and he will himself make the greatest possible *use* of those whom he finds at his side. All the great

forays of the human spirit, whether by Marx or Rousseau, were originally one-man expeditions which gathered company from the bystanders as they moved. No writer worthy the name ever refused to make his position clear for fear that position might advantage others than himself — even others whom he had no wish to help.

Earl Browder, the head of the American Communist Party, welcomed the nondenominational writers to the first Congress of 1935, speaking of the struggle which writers had been engaged in from the beginning of the century, long before the name of Russia entered as a symbol either of admiration or suspicion. This, as Browder put it, was

the struggle for a literature capable of satisfying the cultural needs of humanity in the period of break-up of the old social economic system, the period of chaos and readjustment, the period of searching for the values of the new society. This new society is not yet in existence in America, although we are powerfully affected by its glorious rise in the Soviet Union. The new literature must help to create a new society in America — that is its main function — giving it firm roots in our own traditional cultural life, holding fast to all that is of value in the old, saving it from the destruction threatened by the modern vandals brought forth by a rotting capitalism, the fascists, combining the new with the best of the old world heritage.

To such words of idealism few writers could be cold. A traditional role of American writers, when they wished to be more than entertainers, stood behind them as precept. Their own earlier efforts in the 1920's gave the validity of personal experience. It would be impossible to say precisely how many writers were actually to take out membership cards in the Party, but of those who lent their support to the United Front there were few who felt that they should turn their backs on a country like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which the United States of America had officially recognized in 1933, and which more than any other nation seemed to be taking action in a time that needed it, an action apparently firm in its opposition to that form of action which Fascism had developed.

From the time when the Russian Czars had been overthrown, the revolutionary movement in that country seemed, in its youthful disdain of an intolerable status quo, congenial to the American youthful impatience with situations that could be bettered. Such a quality gave the appeal that men like Benét felt. The political opposition to the Russian revolutionists, on the part of other countries, appeared to be little more than a customary reluctance against progress, which in time would be overcome. Recognition of Russia did, to an extent, overcome the reluctance. What came to be said in opposition to Soviet idealism was often simply technological in tone:

that the experiment would not work out. But whereas other nations seemed to be more or less content with themselves in the postwar period, Russia had already in 1928 made the beginnings of its much publicized first Five-Year Plan. This was societal and industrial planning in which technologically minded Americans could not help but be interested. America's own course in the crisis of economic depression or in catastrophes was not completely dissimilar. Whereas the Soviet Union had been held up before the general public as a bogey, increasingly in the 1930's her international actions seemed to be toward peace and working agreements between nations. In July of 1932 the U.S.S.R. signed non-aggression pacts with Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Finland; and in November of the same year a similar pact was made with France. In 1934, as though bowing to the justice of international reason, she recognized the loss of Bessarabia and joined the League of Nations. In 1935 a Franco-Russian agreement of defensive alliance was concluded. Both internally and externally the pattern of Soviet movements was towards order. Western-Christian-Democratic values were ostensibly dominant, and the policy of the Third International for a United Front appeared to signify an ideological readiness for democratic action in a world that seemed otherwise morally inert.

The Soviet Union was excluded by the other powers from the negotiations at Munich, and so did not share in that symbol of culpability; she even seemed to gain in moral prestige by the fact of her absence. As "the war of nerves" between Germany and western Europe drew inevitably nearer to a war of weapons, Soviet spokesmen began to urge a hands-off. "Do you really believe that this is an ideological war?" a poet like Kenneth Rexroth, following the line, was to protest even after later events. "The only way this war can be stopped is by starving it to death." There had been many who, during these moments, were ready to follow such a path of rigid non-intervention, despite their criticism of similar policies at the time of the Spanish War. Too many broken treaties, too much appeasement now stood in the way. "A plague o' both your houses!" was reborn from the grave of Shakespeare to the stage of the modern world.

Then suddenly, for many, the top blew off! On August 23, 1939, non-aggression and trade pacts were concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union. Variously the former was to be known as the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Russo-German Pact, or the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The last two titles only added diplomatic dignity to the description of a startling alliance for which there was no preparation in the minds or sensibilities of American writers. By it, Russia, although not actively entering the war on the side of the Nazis, gave them the green light for their entry into Poland. The food to be shipped proffered sustenance, not starvation. German Fascism, which

had been painted as Hell, with Hitler as Satan, now was said by the facts of the Pact to be less culpable than the stand of those who were to be known as the Allies. For American writers remembered what had been said ideologically at the time of the Spanish War, when only active participation against evil counted, and when non-intervention of this kind was said to be in reality sponsorship of Germany and Italy. Whatever weaknesses of policy or even of motives could be laid at the door of the Allies, the truth about Fascism far more than counterbalanced them. Without actively opposing Hitlerism it was obvious that there would be no opportunity to accomplish good. Russia was no longer in active opposition.

What the Nazi-Soviet Pact represented, diplomatically speaking, was *Realpolitik*; but what it represented ideologically was the denial of the primacy of morality in politics, which as a goal represented a significant aspect of American aspiration. To the sophisticated historian educated in the diplomatic history of Russia and western Europe, such an agreement as had now been completed was simply a continuation of the traditional manipulation of balance of power. The Czars had negotiated variously on such a basis; the French and Germans and British had all done it. Most recently in 1926, Germany and the U.S.S.R. had concluded a Treaty of Berlin, which had established neutrality in the event of an unprovoked attack on either. The Franco-Russian defensive agreement of 1935 had not been dissimilar. The exclusion of Russia from the conversations at Munich had left her outside the group of western European powers, and, from the standpoint of traditional European diplomacy, pushed her toward the alternatives of either the throat or the arms of Germany. But such *Realpolitik*, though explainable on practical grounds of national expediency, has nothing to do with the defense of idealism or the supremacy of ethics. It had been on precisely these issues that American writers had listened to Russia. The absence of morality in politics was what they had tried to oppose. The value they placed on morality was a value they still clung to.

There were other values whose violation on the part of the Soviet Union they now saw more clearly. Past policies by Russia seemed more than possibly to have been framed in terms of expediency rather than courageous belief. Not unity so much as a shattering disunity had been sponsored, not order but disorder. The Nazi-Soviet Pact was to a very real degree a climax of smaller but cumulative crises. In meeting them, even before the Pact, more and more writers had slipped away from a belief in the "Bolshevik" alternative, which had once seemed so rosy. The Spanish War itself had demonstrated to many who participated in it, or knew it through less than a mist, that Russia had been as interested in fomenting dissension in Barcelona as in working for a speedy victory and peace. She herself had used

Spain as a testing ground. Most significant of all these earlier repudiations of an ostensible idealism had been the long series of trials within Russia against internal dissidents. From 1927 on, when Trotsky and others were expelled from the Party and banished to the provinces, there was an increasing certainty that Russia herself would not permit the same encouragement of criticism she advocated abroad. Freedom of opinion, and the right of every man to search for and expose truth, could not be said to obtain under such circumstances. Education, in the American sense, was impossible unless man actually had the liberty for investigation which was promised him. In 1935, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others were convicted and sentenced to prison; in 1936 some sixteen "self-reliants" were executed. In 1937 there were more trials, and in 1938 still others. The material achievements of which Russia boasted meant, if they existed, little more than Philistine achievements if idealism did not accompany them. Artists and writers began disconsolately watching the penned-in lot of their Soviet colleagues, with the feeling that Russia did not really respect intellectuals but found them only temporarily useful as pawns. Soviet Russia represented an orthodoxy more terrifying and oppressive than anything which American writers had termed as "Puritanism" or "Philistinism." What all these uneasinesses had begun, the Nazi-Soviet Pact brought to a climax. It was not a single crisis that had to be met, but a peak that was more than a monadnock.

The crisis that the Nazi-Soviet Pact represented for the American writer was spiritual, intellectual, and moral. He had been led by his training in the importance of truth; he was now met with a technique of deception. He believed in the primacy of the spirit, and was faced with the tactics of expediency. He had been instilled with a hatred of immorality, and was now asked to tolerate it. The very values that he had relied on, and been pledged to, were being betrayed. He had been tricked, led astray, and manipulated; and by these attitudes of distrust even his dignity as an individual had been shattered. Much more, however, than his self-respect and pride were involved, though these matters obviously came into play. The American writer had been trained too long in an American way. He had been educated in terms of a traditional role and responsibility of the writer. One of the responsibilities was the necessity of admitting errors of assessment when the truths of education pointed them out as false. It was not the least of the triumphs of the values impelling them that so many writers had the humility to admit the error of their assessment.

Not every writer did so immediately. Some were still learning and, even after the Pact, still clung to that which the United Front had promised. A public letter, in which the achievements and claims of Russia were still held

forth, was published in *The Nation* in 1939, with some four hundred signatures of writers and intellectuals. The ten points of its argument were:

1. The Soviet Union continues as always to be a bulwark against war and aggression, and works unceasingly for a peaceful international order.
2. It has eliminated racial and national prejudices within its borders, freed the minority peoples enslaved under the czars, stimulated the culture and economic welfare of these peoples, and made the expression of anti-Semitism or any racial animosity a criminal offense.
3. It has socialized the means of production and distribution through the public ownership of industry and the collectivization of agriculture.
4. It has established nation-wide socialistic planning, resulting in increasingly higher living standards and the abolishment of unemployment.
5. It has built the trade unions, in which almost 24,000,000 workers are organized, into the very fabric of its society.
6. The Soviet Union has emancipated woman and the family, and has developed an advanced system of child care.
7. From the viewpoint of cultural freedom, the difference between the Soviet Union and the fascist countries is most striking. The Soviet Union has effected one of the most far-reaching cultural and educational advances in all history and among a population which at the start was almost three-fourths illiterate. Those writers and thinkers whose books have been burned by the Nazis are published in the Soviet Union. The best literature from Homer to Thomas Mann, the best thought from Aristotle to Lenin, are available to the masses of the Soviet people. . . .
8. It has replaced the myths and superstitions of old Russia with the truths and techniques of experimental science, extending scientific procedures to every field, from economics to public health.
9. The Soviet Union considers political dictatorship a transitional form and has shown a steadily expanding democracy in every sphere. Its epoch-making new constitution guarantees Soviet citizens universal suffrage, civil liberties, the right to employment, to leisure, to free education, to free medical care, to material security in sickness and old age, to equality of the sexes in all fields of activity, and to equality of all races and nationalities.
10. In relation to Russia's past, the country has been advancing rapidly along the road of material and cultural progress in way that the American people can understand and appreciate.

This was a picture of the Soviet Union filled with appeals to the traditional American values, and by the nature of its appeal showed how strongly the values persisted as a judicial force. The assertions of the ten points did not coincide with whatever points would have clarified Fascism. Only the facts of the Soviet Union and its actions no longer seemed to fit the asser-

tions either. Certainly they did not when Russia marched into Poland and the Baltic States, and invaded Finland. It was necessary to repeat once more the value-process of Hemingway's hero, who found abstract terms to be obscene when they did not jibe with what was actual and concrete. The error of American writers in the 1930's had not been so much that their method or values were fallacious as that putting them into effect had been only partial. Examining the abstract terms that had clouded the realities on one side, they had not pursued their method sufficiently to examine them on the other. They had for the moment drifted into a position where they were themselves properly suspect in thoroughness. But the vitality that had originally prompted them was maintained. They had demonstrated the possibility of error, but in their shift of position they showed the value of values. It was a better preservation of values to have used them than simply to have stood pat.

Nothing has restored Soviet Russia to the dream she once represented. Of his book, *I like America*, published in 1938 when he was still a Party member, Granville Hicks could say after he had left the Party because of the Pact: "[It] contains only two or three pages, those dealing with the Soviet Union and the Party itself, that I could wish expunged." In 1950, William Rose Benét looked back on history, in a letter written little more than a week before his death. He himself had gone through many of the experiences which have been described in general terms. Now he could only say sadly:

The situation abroad from what I can make out is pretty grim, though not to (apparently) the Daily Worker. What appalls me is that so many evil things are being done in the name of all we used to hold high-minded, for all of us at some time along the way have been taken by the dream of socialism. As poets when we were young we often inveighed against capitalism as a prison camp, and I was at first indignant at Hilaire Belloc's title for his book "The Slave State." Unfortunately he was right as rain.

What was importantly true for literary figures like Benét, and like Hicks, was not that any of their values had been proved wrong, but only the disheartening correlation of facts to them. To the values, they and others like them had stuck. It was not that being educated to truth, as Adams had put it, was incorrect, but only that their education had been incomplete. What was to be learned was — is — the true capacity to bear the burden of truth. If those writers were now old, there were others who were young and could learn from them and from history. But the endurance for both is inseparable from the iron help of the values themselves as a reliance. There is still the need for the values, and the values were not lost.

THE DEBATE OVER AMERICA'S ENTRANCE INTO WORLD WAR II

The entry of the United States into both of this century's world wars has produced an extensive and heated historical literature with one side dedicated to proving the necessity of American actions and the other wedded to the opposite proposition, emphasizing the destructive effects of American involvement. However, a number of important differences in the two debates reflect changes in the temper and position of the United States during the past several decades. The post-World War I revisionists took Wilson and his advisors to task for their partiality to England, their high-handed methods with Germany, their lack of wisdom and reality, and their supposed defense of the interests of a small group of Wall Street bankers and munitions manufacturers. But they rarely cast doubt upon Wilson's loyalty or basic sincerity. Most of these revisionists had supported Wilson's domestic reform program and made no attempt to connect his domestic and foreign policies. At the worst Wilson was painted as a dedicated man duped by the machinations of financial magnates, the advice of some of his Anglophilic advisors, and the propaganda of the Allies.

Except for a few historians and commentators, most notably Charles Beard, who wrote more in the tradition of their revisionist predecessors, most of the current crop of revisionists can be classified as domestic conservatives who opposed the entire New Deal, often pointing to the "foreign" influences within it, and saw connections between the domestic and international aspects of New Deal policy. E. E. Robinson's *The Roosevelt Leadership* (Philadelphia, 1955), J. T. Flynn's *The Roosevelt Myth* (New York, 1948), and F. Sanborn's *Design For War* (New York, 1951), are excellent examples of this sort of reasoning. The anger at Roosevelt's *total* set of policies, foreign and domestic, is reflected in the fact that he has been accorded far harsher treatment than Wilson had suffered. He was depicted as Machiavellian, mendacious, and unscrupulous — less the victim than the creator of the conditions that plunged the United States into war. The revisionist treatment of Roosevelt reveals the depths of antagonism he aroused in his opponents and the growing alignment between domestic conservatives and isolationists or, at least, anti-interventionists. Few supporters of the New Deal reforms could be counted among the ranks of the revisionists. This new political alignment may help to explain why the attack upon conservative financial and industrial influences on American for-

eign policy, so common in World War I revisionism, was almost entirely lacking after World War II. The cry against greedy bankers and businessmen was not resumed. Instead, most revisionist criticism was reserved for the federal government in general and Roosevelt and his New Deal in particular.

Interestingly, for all their zeal, the latter-day revisionists have enjoyed far less success than their predecessors. Though politicians in the 'fifties capitalized on the reaction against the United States' wartime friendship with the Soviet Union, the Yalta agreements, the "sell-out" of China, and the like, there has been no widespread overt public repudiation of Roosevelt's foreign policy. America's post-World War II commitment to internationalism has been far more enduring than that which followed World War I.

In the article that follows, Wayne S. Cole, Professor of History at Iowa State University, traces the debate concerning America's involvement in World War II in some detail. The debate, as Professor Cole shows, has centered almost entirely upon the actions of the United States. This one-sided emphasis has too often clouded the picture in the past and continues to blur it in the present. In order to understand American actions more fully historians must pay more attention to the aims and policies of other nations, especially, in the case of World War II, those of the Axis powers.

American Entry into World War II: A Historiographical Appraisal

WAYNE S. COLE

The aggressive expansion of the Axis powers in Europe and Asia in the 1930's aroused an impassioned debate on American foreign policy. "Isolationists" contended with "interventionists" over the policies adopted by the Roosevelt administration. Though few, if any, of the so-called isolationists wanted literally to isolate the United States from the rest of the world, they joined in opposition to what seemed the major trend in foreign affairs under President Roosevelt. A second phase in the dispute over policy was inaugurated by the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, for with that event the old quarrels became academic. But the policies of the Roosevelt administration continued as the core of dispute between two schools

Reprinted from the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* XLIII (March 1957) 595-617, by permission.

of historians who launched their own war of words over the background of America's entry into war. In the years after 1941 the "internationalist" writers were met by the "revisionists" — the latter term now used almost universally to describe the historians who have written critically of Roosevelt's pre-Pearl Harbor foreign policies and of American entry into World War II.¹ Since the controversy is a continuing one, and because the books and articles on the subject have grown to confusing proportions, some orientation is necessary both for the reader who must work his way through the published historical materials and for those attracted to the problem as a field for further research and writing.

Histories of American entry into World War II published during the war defended the pre-Pearl Harbor policies of the Roosevelt administration. Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindley had close ties with the administration which enabled them to obtain important data for their volume, *How War Came*.² Walter Johnson's book, *The Battle against Isolation*,³ published in 1944, was a study of the most powerful interventionist pressure groups before Pearl Harbor. Johnson, unlike some later writers, based his study upon previously unused manuscripts — principally the William Allen White papers. In the same year Dexter Perkins provided a concise survey in *America and Two Wars*.⁴ The authors of these books shared and endorsed most of the assumptions and convictions of the interventionists and the Roosevelt administration on foreign affairs. The emotional atmosphere of the war years, the necessity for unity in the prosecution of the war, and the inadequacy of available source materials combined to prevent

¹ The terms commonly used on this subject are somewhat less than satisfactory. The term "isolationist" was widely used to describe the opponents of Roosevelt's foreign policies before Pearl Harbor, but the term "non-interventionist," though used much less frequently before Pearl Harbor, is a more accurate description of opponents of Roosevelt's foreign policies.

The term "internationalist" was a satisfactory description of many defenders of Roosevelt's foreign policies before Pearl Harbor. It was perhaps inappropriate, however, for many others who supported his foreign policies by 1941, such as the American Legion. The term "interventionist" likewise has inaccurate connotations. It is acceptable only if defined to include those who wished the United States to limit its "intervention" to methods short of war, as well as those who wanted full military intervention. The term "court historian," used by Harry Elmer Barnes and Charles C. Tansill to describe pro-Roosevelt writers, is, like the term "isolationist," unsatisfactory on two counts: (1) It is not literally accurate. (2) It carries such a high emotional content that it interferes with dispassionate thought on the subject. The term "internationalist" is reasonably satisfactory for most historians who have defended Roosevelt's prewar foreign policies. The use of this term for pro-Roosevelt writers implies, however, that revisionists are not "internationalists." This implication may be valid for some; but other historians who believe the United States should not have entered World War II are in fact "internationalists."

² *How War Came: An American White Paper, from the Fall of France to Pearl Harbor* (New York, 1942).

³ (Chicago, 1944).

⁴ (Boston, 1944).

any serious challenge to the pro-Roosevelt interpretation during the war. Pamphlets by John T. Flynn, published in 1944 and 1945, advanced the revisionist point of view, but they received relatively little attention.⁵

During and since World War II growing quantities of raw materials for historical research and interpretation on the subject have been published and made available to scholars. The United States government published special sets of documents related to American entry into the war, beginning with the publication in 1943 of *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941*.⁶ In addition, the regular *Foreign Relations* series is now being brought close to Pearl Harbor.⁷ Military leaders and civilians associated with the Roosevelt administration published personal accounts. Among Americans whose memoirs or letters have been published in full or in part are Raymond Moley, William E. Dodd, Joseph E. Davies, Sumner Welles, Frances Perkins, John G. Winant, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Henry L. Stimson, Cordell Hull, James A. Farley, Sherman Miles, Eleanor Roosevelt, William D. Leahy, Samuel I. Rosenman, Joseph C. Grew, Ernest J. King, Harold L. Ickes, Husband E. Kimmel, and Jay P. Moffat.⁸ Several

⁵ *The Truth about Pearl Harbor* (New York [1944]); *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor* (New York, [1945]).

⁶ Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931-1941* (2 vols., Washington, 1943); Department of State, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, 1943); Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, 1948); *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers; The Soviet Union, 1933-1939* (Washington, 1952). See also, Office of Naval Intelligence, *Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939-1941* (5 vols., Washington, 1947).

⁷ Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1861-1941* (Washington, 1861-1956). The series has been completed through the year 1938. Three of the five volumes for 1939, one of the five for 1940, and one for 1941 have also been published.

⁸ In the order of publication: Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York, 1939); William E. Dodd, Jr., and Martha Dodd (eds.), *Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938* (New York, 1941); Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* . . . (New York, 1941); Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York, 1944); Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision* (New York, 1944); Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York, 1946); John G. Winant, *Letter from Grosvenor Square: An Account of a Stewardship* (Boston, 1947); Henry Morgenthau, Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries," *Collier's* (New York), October 4, 11, 18, 25, 1947; Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, 1948); *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (2 vols., New York, 1948); James A. Farley, *Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years* (New York, 1948); Sherman Miles, "Pearl Harbor in Retrospect," *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston), CLXXXII (July, 1948), 65-72; Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember* (New York, 1949); William D. Leahy, *I Was There: The Personal Story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman* (New York, 1950); Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (New York, 1952); Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945* (2 vols., Boston, 1952); Ernest J. King and Walter M. Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record* (New York, 1952); Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes* (3 vols., New York, 1953-1954); Husband E. Kimmel, *Admiral Kimmel's Story* (Chicago, 1955); Nancy H. Hooker (ed.), *The Moffat Papers: Selection from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943* (Cambridge, 1956).

key figures thus far have not published memoirs — including George C. Marshall, Harold R. Stark, Walter C. Short, Frank Knox, and President Roosevelt. Edited volumes of Roosevelt's speeches, press conferences, and personal letters, however, have been published.⁹ Documents, testimony, and reports of the several Pearl Harbor investigations were made available with the publication in 1946 of a total of forty volumes covering the work of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack.¹⁰ The war crimes trials in Nuremberg and the Far East added pertinent documents and testimony.¹¹ Documents on British and German foreign policy before the war have been published.¹² Memoirs of leaders of European states were printed, containing much information of value for an understanding and analysis of American policies. The volumes by Winston Churchill and Count Ciano's diaries are two important examples.¹³ And gradually in recent years historians have obtained increased opportunities for research in unpublished manuscripts.

Most of the histories published from 1947 to 1950 on American entry into World War II were based almost exclusively on published sources — particularly on the volumes growing out of the Pearl Harbor investigations and on the memoirs of Hull, Stimson, and others. Most of these early books followed the lead of either the majority (pro-Roosevelt) or the minority (anti-Roosevelt) report of the congressional investigation committee. Among the volumes of this sort defending Roosevelt's foreign policies were *This Is Pearl*, by Walter Millis,¹⁴ and *Roosevelt, from Munich to Pearl*

⁹ Samuel I. Rosenman (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (13 vols., New York, 1938–1950); Elliott Roosevelt (ed.), *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters* (4 vols., New York, 1947–1950).

¹⁰ *Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, 79 Cong., 2 Sess. (39 parts, with exhibits; Washington, 1946); *Report of the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, 79 Cong., 2 Sess. (Washington, 1946).

¹¹ International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg* (42 vols., Nuremberg, 1947–1949); Office of the United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (11 vols., Washington, 1946–1948); International Military Tribunal for the Far East, *Record of Proceedings* (Washington, 1946).

¹² *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (Third Series, 9 vols., London, 1949–1955); and *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry* (Series D, 9 vols. to date, Washington, 1949–). The British series, now complete, covers the period from March 9, 1938, to September 5, 1939. The German documents in this series begin in 1936 and have now been brought to June 22, 1940. In addition, several European governments published sets of selected documents in 1939 and 1940 around the time of the outbreak of war.

¹³ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War* (6 vols., Boston, 1948–1953); Hugh Gibson (ed.), *The Ciano Diaries, 1939–1943: The Complete Unabridged Diaries of Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs* (Garden City, 1946). See also Togo Shigenori, *The Cause of Japan* (New York, 1956).

¹⁴ *This Is Pearl! The United States and Japan — 1941* (New York, 1947).

Harbor, by Basil Rauch.¹⁵ Revisionist volumes, based largely on published sources, included *Pearl Harbor*, by George Morgenstern;¹⁶ *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941*, by Charles A. Beard;¹⁷ *America's Second Crusade*, by William Henry Chamberlin;¹⁸ *Design for War*, by Frederic R. Sanborn, published in 1951;¹⁹ and *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor*, by Robert A. Theobald, published in 1954.²⁰

Gradually in the late 1940's and early 1950's scholars began to expand into new frontiers by research in unpublished manuscripts. Most of this group wrote from points of view sympathetic with the policies followed by the American government before Pearl Harbor. Robert E. Sherwood used the files of Harry Hopkins as the basis for his Pulitzer-prize-winning *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, published in 1948.²¹ *The Battle of the Atlantic and The Rising Sun in the Pacific*,²² by Samuel Morison, traced the naval side of the background of American entry into the war. *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, by Mark S. Watson, analyzed the role of the Army.²³ Herbert Feis's study of American relations with Japan, entitled *The Road to Pearl Harbor*, was based on more extensive research than earlier volumes on that subject.²⁴ The culmination of the internationalist interpretation came with the publication in 1952 and 1953 of the two-volume work by William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason under the general title of *The World Crisis and American Foreign Policy*.²⁵ This massive study, covering the years from 1937 to 1941, was sponsored and financed by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Rockefeller Foundation. These volumes were based not only on published materials but also on extensive research in the records of the Department of State and in the material at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park. Since the publication of the Langer-

¹⁵ *Roosevelt from Munich to Pearl Harbor: A Study in the Creation of a Foreign Policy* (New York, 1950).

¹⁶ *Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War* (New York, 1947).

¹⁷ *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941: A Study in Appearances and Realities* (New Haven, 1948). See also Charles A. Beard, *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940: A Study in Responsibilities* (New Haven, 1946).

¹⁸ (Chicago, 1950).

¹⁹ *Design for War: A Study of Secret Power Politics, 1937-1941* (New York, 1951).

²⁰ *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor: The Washington Contribution to the Japanese Attack* (New York, 1954).

²¹ *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York, 1948).

²² These are Volumes I (1947) and III (1948) of Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II* (10 vols. to date, Boston, 1947-).

²³ (Washington, 1950). This is a volume in the series entitled *United States Army in World War II*, being prepared by the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army.

²⁴ *The Road to Pearl Harbor: The Coming of the War between the United States and Japan* (Princeton, 1950).

²⁵ *The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940* (New York, 1952); and *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York, 1953).

Gleason work, the most recent book written from this same general point of view is *The Passing of American Neutrality, 1937-1941*, by Donald F. Drummond, published in 1955.²⁶ On the revisionist side, Charles Callan Tansill, after research comparable to that of Langer and Gleason, published his *Back Door to War* in 1952.²⁷ Harry Elmer Barnes, who had published several pamphlets on the subject earlier, edited a volume called *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* that included essays written by most major revisionists.²⁸ Richard N. Current's critical study, *Secretary Stimson*, was published in 1954.²⁹ In addition, other books and numerous articles have appeared, particularly since 1950, on specialized aspects of the subject.³⁰

The interpretative controversies among historians concerning American entry into World War II are in part a direct extension of the pre-Pearl Harbor debate between interventionists and non-interventionists. Writers of history have not only dealt with the same basic subject and issues, but have also used the same arguments, made the same fundamental assumptions, and advanced similar hypotheses. For most major hypotheses advanced by postwar historians, counterparts could be found in the writings and speeches of prewar interventionists and non-interventionists. Furthermore, the debate among historians aroused some of the same emotional heat, the same ideological dogmatism, the same intolerance of conflicting views, and the same black-and-white portraits — on both sides — as were aroused in the "Great Debate" before Pearl Harbor. There are exceptions, of course, but there were also exceptions before Pearl Harbor.

²⁶ (Ann Arbor, 1955).

²⁷ *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941* (Chicago, 1952).

²⁸ *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1953).

²⁹ *Secretary Stimson: A Study in Statecraft* (New Brunswick, 1954).

³⁰ For examples in addition to items cited elsewhere in this article, see: Hans L. Trefoosse, *Germany and American Neutrality, 1939-1941* (New York, 1951); William L. Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble* (New York, 1947); Edgar E. Robinson, *The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945* (Philadelphia, 1955); Fillmore H. Sanford, "Public Orientation to Roosevelt," *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Princeton), XV (Summer, 1951), 189-216; Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, "Kurusu's Mission to the United States and the Abortive *Modus Vivendi*," *Journal of Modern History* (Chicago), XXIV (September, 1952), 301-307; Norman L. Hill, "Was There an Ultimatum before Pearl Harbor?" *American Journal of International Law* (Washington), XLII (April, 1948), 355-67; Richard N. Current, "How Stimson Meant to 'Maneuver' the Japanese," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids), XL (June, 1953), 67-74; William L. Neumann, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Japan, 1913-1933," *Pacific Historical Review* (Berkeley), XXII (May, 1953), 143-53; Tracy B. Kittredge, "The Muddle before Pearl Harbor," *United States News and World Report* (Washington), XXXVII (December 3, 1954), 52-63, 110-39; Joseph W. Ballantine, "Mukden to Pearl Harbor: The Foreign Policies of Japan," *Foreign Affairs* (New York), XXVII (July, 1949), 651-64; Herbert Feis, "War Came at Pearl Harbor: Suspensions Considered," *Yale Review* (New Haven), XLV (Spring, 1956), 378-90.

In many instances the individuals who have written scholarly histories on the subject were involved directly (sometimes prominently) in the pre-Pearl Harbor foreign policy debate—and on the same side that they are now defending in their histories. There is no evidence that any of these writers was persuaded to change his basic point of view as the result of historical research after the war. It is true, of course, that Walter Millis' *Road to War*, published in 1935, was a major revisionist interpretation of American entry into World War I. Millis, however, was on the editorial staff of the interventionist New York *Herald Tribune*, and by 1939 he publicly endorsed the interventionist position. In June, 1940, he signed a petition urging an American declaration of war on Nazi Germany. In 1941 he was a sponsor of the Fight for Freedom Committee—a major pressure group advocating full United States participation in the war against the Axis.³¹ Robert E. Sherwood's Pulitzer-prize-winning play, *Idiot's Delight*, with its arraignment of war and war passions, undoubtedly aroused pacifist and non-interventionist emotions. By 1939-1941, however, Sherwood was an interventionist. He actively and prominently supported William Allen White's Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Harry Hopkins assured himself of the vigor of Sherwood's interventionist views before he added the playwright to President Roosevelt's speech-writing staff in 1940.³²

Barnes and Tansill refer to the internationalist writers as "Court Historians." One need not endorse the sinister implications of this sobriquet. Many internationalist writers, however, did have sympathetic personal ties and friendships with key figures in the events they described in their histories. Several of them have held important government positions in the administration whose foreign policies they were analyzing and evaluating. Ernest K. Lindley's personal friendship with President Roosevelt and other key administration figures enabled him to obtain special interviews and inside information for the preparation of his sympathetic volume.³³ Robert E. Sherwood assisted President Roosevelt with the writing of his speeches from 1940 until the President's death in 1945.³⁴ Herbert Feis was an economic adviser in the Department of State from 1931 to 1943 and was special consultant to the Secretary of War from 1944 to 1946. William L. Langer from 1941 to 1946 held various positions in the Office of Coordinator of Information, the Office of Strategic Services, and the Department

³¹ Walter Millis, "1939 Is Not 1914," *Life* (New York), VII (November 6, 1939), 69-75, 94-98; Johnson, *Battle against Isolation*, 114-15, 247, 251-52.

³² Johnson, *Battle against Isolation*, 43, 70 n, 85-88, 94 n, 116 n, 152-53, 206; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 49-50, 167, 303.

³³ Davis and Lindley, *How War Came*, vii-viii; Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War*, 243 n.

³⁴ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 183-84.

of State. He served the Central Intelligence Agency in 1950-1951. S. Everett Gleason was with the Office of Strategic Services from 1943 to 1945 and the Department of State in 1945. He has served as deputy executive secretary to the National Security Council since 1950. Samuel Eliot Morison was commissioned in the naval reserve with the sole duty of preparing the history of United States naval operations in World War II. He rose to the rank of rear admiral by the time he retired in 1951. Mark S. Watson's book is a part of the official history of the Army in World War II. None of the major revisionist writers, on the contrary, held important administrative positions under either President Roosevelt or President Truman.³⁵

All revisionists for whom specific evidence is available adhered to the non-interventionist position before Pearl Harbor. Charles A. Beard's pre-war "Continentalism" as expressed in such books as *The Open Door at Home*³⁶ and *A Foreign Policy for America*³⁷ is well known. He publicly endorsed (but did not join) the America First Committee, the leading non-interventionist pressure group before Pearl Harbor.³⁸ He also testified against Lend-Lease before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee³⁹ Harry Elmer Barnes, one of the leading and more uncompromising revisionists regarding the origins of World War I, spoke at meetings of the America First Committee in 1941.⁴⁰ Charles C. Tansill in 1938 published the best of the revisionist studies of American entry into World War I.⁴¹ George Morgenstern joined the editorial staff of the non-interventionist *Chicago Tribune* in 1941. For revisionist as well as internationalist it is possible to discern a continuity in viewpoint, extending from the pre- to the post-Pearl Harbor period.

Any brief summaries of the revisionist and internationalist interpretations of American entry into World War II can at best be no more than simplified versions of detailed and complicated accounts. It is necessary in presenting such a summary to pass over countless important details and individual variations in interpretation. There is, nevertheless, a wide area of agreement among writers on each side of the interpretative controversy.

³⁵ Biographical data in this and the following paragraph were obtained largely from *Who's Who in America* and from the contents and jackets of the various books written by these men.

³⁶ *The Open Door at Home: A Trial Philosophy of National Interest* (New York, 1934).

³⁷ (New York, 1940).

³⁸ *New York Times*, September 9, 1940; Wayne S. Cole, *America First: The Battle against Intervention, 1940-1941* (Madison, 1953), 75.

³⁹ *Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations* [on S. 275], *United States Senate*, 77 Cong., 1 Sess. (Washington, 1941), 307-13.

⁴⁰ Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War: An Introduction to the Problem of War Guilt* (New York, 1926); Cole, *America First*, 45, 76, 79.

⁴¹ *America Goes to War* (Boston, 1938).

Internationalist writers, looking back to the days before Pearl Harbor, view the Axis powers as extremely serious threats to American security and interests. They point to the strength and speed of the Axis forces which by the middle of 1940 had rolled over Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Belgium, and France. Britain alone was successfully resisting Nazi assaults on her home islands. By May, 1941, Hitler was in control of the Balkan Peninsula and was threatening the Middle East. Most authorities at the time expected the Soviet Union to fall quickly after Hitler's *Blitzkrieg* was turned against Russia on June 22, 1941. Axis successes in North Africa raised fears that control of that continent might prove a stepping-stone to the Western Hemisphere. In the meantime Japan took advantage of the European crises to step up her aggressive campaigns in Asia.

According to the internationalist interpretation, President Roosevelt believed the United States could most effectively increase the possibility of peace in the 1930's by using its power to discourage potential aggressors from provoking war. In this aim, however, he was handicapped by the "isolationist" attitude of the American people and particularly by the powerful opposition in Congress. After war began in Asia and in Europe, according to this interpretation, the President hoped to prevent the United States from becoming involved in the hostilities — providing that could be accomplished without sacrificing American security, vital interests, and principles.

President Roosevelt and his major advisers believed that aggression by Germany and Italy in Europe constituted a more serious threat to American security than did Japanese actions in the Far East. In general, internationalist writers follow the administration view that the defeat of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy was essential to American peace and security. Like the Roosevelt administration, most of these writers tend to rule out a negotiated peace as a possible acceptable alternative in Europe — particularly after the fall of France. President Roosevelt hoped that his policy of extending aid short of war to the victims of Axis aggression in Europe would prevent the defeat of Great Britain, contribute to the essential defeat of the Axis powers, and thereby enable the United States to maintain both its peace and its security. Among the many steps taken by the Roosevelt administration to aid the victims of aggression in Europe were repeal of the arms embargo, the destroyer deal, Lend-Lease, the Atlantic patrol system, occupation of Iceland, the shoot-on-sight policy, arming of American merchant ships, and permitting the use of those ships to transport goods directly to England.

According to the internationalist interpretation, Roosevelt and Hull

wanted to prevent war between the United States and Japan — in part because such a war would interfere with the main task of defeating Hitler. They believed that the best way to preserve American peace and security in the Pacific was to take steps short of war to check Japanese aggression. Among American actions of this sort were the “moral embargo,” the termination of the commercial treaty with Japan, various forms of aid to Chiang Kai-shek, keeping the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, and freezing Japanese assets in the United States. The United States was eager to seek a peaceful settlement with Japan — providing such a settlement would not jeopardize American security and principles, and providing it would not require the United States to abandon China, Britain, France, and the Netherlands in the Pacific. As it became increasingly apparent that compromise was impossible on terms acceptable to both countries, the Roosevelt administration tried to delay war to gain time for military preparations.

With regard to the European theater as well as the Pacific, there were distinct variations in the views of administration leaders before Pearl Harbor about implementing American policies and presenting them to the American people. Cordell Hull, hoping to avoid war and fearful of non-interventionist opposition, generally advised caution. He favored limiting action to steps short of war and he explained each step in terms of peace, security, and international morality. Henry L. Stimson, Frank Knox, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and others were critical of this indirect and step-at-a-time approach. They early came to believe that aid short of war would not be sufficient to insure the defeat of the Axis and they urged the President to take more vigorous action against the aggressors. Stimson believed the American people would support the President in a declaration of war even before Pearl Harbor. Of a different temperament, President Roosevelt, like Hull, was fearful of arousing effective public opposition to his policies and adhered to the step-at-a-time, short-of-war approach.⁴²

Internationalist interpretations tend to reflect these variations in attitudes among prewar interventionists. Feis treats Hull with considerable respect. Rauch's interpretation is similar to that advanced by Hull, though the hero in Rauch's book is definitely President Roosevelt. A number of writers, like Davis, Lindley, Millis, and Sherwood, generally feel that in view of conditions then existing President Roosevelt's decisions and methods on foreign policy matters were wise and sound at most crucial points before Pearl Harbor. Dexter Perkins has emphasized that Roosevelt's actions to check the Axis in Europe short of war reflected and expressed the desires of the ma-

⁴² For example, see Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service*, 365–76; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 132–35; Langer and Gleason, *Challenge to Isolation*, 5–9; Langer and Gleason, *Undeclared War*, 457–58.

jority of the American people. Langer and Gleason are sympathetic with the more direct and vigorous approach urged by Stimson — particularly as applied to the European theater. They believe that Roosevelt overestimated the strength of the opposition to his policies among the American people.⁴³

Writers of the internationalist school find the fundamental causes for American involvement in the war in developments in other parts of the world — beyond the American power to control by 1941. They do not find the explanation within the United States — except in so far as non-interventionist opposition inhibited administration actions that might have prevented the war from beginning or from reaching such a critical stage. Nearly all internationalist histories are highly critical of the opponents of Roosevelt's foreign policies. Needless to say, they all deny that President Roosevelt wanted to get the United States into war. They are convinced that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a genuine surprise to the members of the Roosevelt administration. These leaders knew that Japanese armed forces were under way and that war was imminent, but they expected the blows to fall in the southwest Pacific. In that event, administration leaders believed the United States would have to fight — though they were worried about the reaction of the American people to a declaration of war on Japan if American territory were not attacked. In so far as there was any American responsibility for the disaster at Pearl Harbor most internationalist writers blame the military commanders in Hawaii — Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short. None of them believe that there were any alternatives available to President Roosevelt by 1940–1941 which could have prevented American involvement in World War II without sacrificing American security and principles.⁴⁴

Revisionists have formed an entirely different estimate of Roosevelt's role and policies. Most of the revisionist interpretations can be summarized under four major headings. First, revisionists believe the Axis powers did not (or, need not — if the United States had followed wiser policies) constitute a serious threat to American security and vital interests. Second, they contend that President Roosevelt followed policies that he knew (or should have known) would lead to war in Asia and Europe and would involve the United States in those wars. Third, while leading the nation to war, the President deceived the American people by telling them he was working

⁴³ Davis and Lindley, *How War Came*, 23–29, 332; Millis, *This Is Pearl*, x–xi; Rauch, *Roosevelt, from Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 3–6, 22–23, 495–96; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 133, 151; Dexter Perkins, "Was Roosevelt Wrong?" *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Charlottesville), XXX (Summer, 1954), 359–64; Langer and Gleason, *Challenge to Isolation*, 5–6; Langer and Gleason, *Undeclared War*, 195–97, 441–44.

⁴⁴ For example, see Millis, *This Is Pearl*, x–xi; Morison, *Rising Sun in the Pacific*, 127–42; Langer and Gleason, *Undeclared War*, 936–37; Rauch, *Roosevelt, from Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 467–93; Watson, *Chief of Staff*, 498–520.

for peace. And fourth, revisionists maintain that American policies before and during World War II contributed to the rise of a much more serious threat to peace and security — Communist Russia and her satellites.

In striking contrast to the internationalist interpretation, the revisionists minimize or reject the idea that the Axis powers constituted a threat to American security. They point out that Hitler had no concrete plans for attacking the Western Hemisphere. They portray the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as an action provoked by American restrictions that threatened Japanese security and vital interests. In so far as revisionists concede the reality of an Axis threat to the United States, they believe it was caused largely by American shortsighted and provocative policies. Like non-interventionists before Pearl Harbor, the revisionists maintain that the issue was not primarily security but instead was war or peace. And revisionists hold that the United States government had the power to choose for itself whether it would or would not enter the war. Thus, in contrast to internationalists, the revisionists find the explanation for American entry into World War II primarily within the United States rather than in the actions of nations in other parts of the world. In seeking the explanation within the United States, they focus their attention almost exclusively upon administration and military leaders — and particularly upon President Roosevelt.

Some revisionist historians believe that the Roosevelt foreign policies helped to provoke and prolong war in Asia and Europe.⁴⁵ They interpret Roosevelt's steps to aid Britain short of war as actually steps to war. Opinions of revisionists vary on the question of whether Roosevelt deliberately meant these as steps to war. In any event, they contend, these actions did not provoke Hitler into war against the United States; and the shooting incidents that occurred in the Atlantic did not arouse American enthusiasm for entering the European war.

Instead, according to most revisionist writers, the Roosevelt administration got the United States into war through the Asiatic "back door" by provoking the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.⁴⁶ This was accomplished by

⁴⁵ Tansill contends (and Barnes concurs) that "There would seem to be only one logical explanation for Roosevelt's insistence on peace at the time of Munich and his pressure for an Anglo-French-Polish stand which he knew meant war in 1939, namely, that he did not want any war to start in Europe which might terminate so rapidly that the United States could not enter it. In September, 1938, the French, British, Russian, and Czech armies could have faced Hitler and might have defeated him rather rapidly. By summer, 1939, the situation had drastically changed. Russia became aligned with Germany and the Czech Army had been immobilized. War, in 1939, might stretch on indefinitely and afford Roosevelt ample time to involve the United States." Barnes (ed.), *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, 171, 201–202 n. See also Chamberlin, *America's Second Crusade*, 59–60. Most revisionists do not take such an extreme position.

⁴⁶ Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor*, 283–84; Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War*, 564–66; Tansill, *Back Door to War*, 615–16; Barnes (ed.), *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, 220–21.

increasing pressures on Japan while refusing any compromise that the Japanese could accept. The decisive economic pressure in 1941 was exerted through the curtailment of oil shipments, and the key issue on which compromise proved impossible was China. The freezing of Japanese assets in the United States on July 26, 1941, accompanied by parallel action by the British and Dutch, virtually terminated American trade with Japan. This was particularly serious in cutting Japan off from her essential oil supplies. On August 17, 1941, at the suggestion of Churchill, President Roosevelt presented a formal and vigorous warning to the Japanese against further expansion. The President then rejected Premier Konoye's proposal for a personal meeting between the two leaders. Then, Secretary of State Hull, after objections from China and Britain, abandoned the idea of proposing a *modus vivendi*. Instead, on November 26, Hull (though aware that time was running out) submitted a ten-point program to Japan — including the demand that the Japanese withdraw from China and Indo-China. This proposal (which revisionists generally call an "ultimatum") was so extreme that Hull knew in advance that Japan would not accept it. According to most revisionists these and other actions by the Roosevelt administration (out of either design or blunder) provoked war with Japan. The United States confronted Japan with the alternatives of backing down or fighting. With oil reserves falling dangerously low, and believing that their vital interests and security were at stake, the Japanese chose to fight.⁴⁷

Through all of this, according to the revisionists, President Roosevelt deceived the American people concerning his policies and objectives in foreign affairs. Revisionists maintain that Roosevelt publicly committed his administration to a policy of peace while secretly leading the nation to war — a war that these writers consider contrary to national interests and contrary to the desires of 80 per cent of the American people. The most famous expression of this thesis is in Beard's last book and particularly in his final chapter.⁴⁸

Most revisionists maintain that administration and military leaders in Washington gave inadequate, ambiguous, and belated warnings to the commanders in Hawaii and withheld essential information from them. According to their contention, officials in Washington had sufficient information — including that obtained by breaking the Japanese secret diplomatic code — to anticipate an early Japanese attack. Furthermore, most of the revisionists believe that data at the disposal of leaders in Washington were sufficient (if properly analyzed) to have warned of a possible attack on

⁴⁷ For example, see Barnes (ed.), *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, 299–307, 327–86.

⁴⁸ Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War*, 573–91.

Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, they say, the administration attempted unjustly to make General Short and Admiral Kimmel, the commanders in Hawaii, scapegoats for the tragedy. Instead of blaming the commanders in Hawaii, the revisionists place the main responsibility upon civilian and military leaders in Washington — including Marshall, Stark, Stimson, Knox, and particularly President Roosevelt. Tansill phrased the idea of Washington responsibility for the war most starkly when he wrote: "It seems quite possible that the Far Eastern Military Tribunal brought to trial the wrong persons. It might have been better if the tribunal had held its sessions in Washington."⁴⁹ On this, as on other phases of the subject, some revisionists, including Beard, Current, and William L. Neumann, write in more restrained and qualified terms than either Tansill or Barnes.

Finally, the revisionists insist that the Roosevelt foreign policies failed to serve American national interests. If, as Roosevelt and Hull contended, American aid to the victims of aggression was designed to keep America out of war, these policies obviously failed. If the Roosevelt policies were designed to protect American security, they were, according to revisionists, of questionable success. By helping to crush Germany and Japan the United States removed two major barriers to Soviet expansion and created power vacuums and chaos which contributed to the rise of the Soviet Union to world power and to the resultant explosive Cold War situation. China, which was considered too vital to compromise in 1941, is now in Communist hands — in part, some revisionists say, because of Roosevelt's policies before and during World War II. Revisionists maintain in general that American involvement left the United States less secure, more burdened by debts and taxes, more laden with the necessity of maintaining huge armed forces than ever before in American history. Some revisionists predict that unless the United States returns to a policy of "continentalism" the nation may be headed for the nightmare described by George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and toward World War III.⁵⁰

It is probable that the reception accorded the revisionist or the internationalist interpretation has been affected as much by the climate of thought and the international developments since Pearl Harbor as by the specific evidence and reasoning relied upon by historians. Emotional, ideological, political, economic, and military conditions from 1942 to 1950 contributed to a widespread acceptance of the internationalist interpretation. The historian who conformed to prevailing modes of thought in the profession did not seriously question the pro-Roosevelt interpretation of American entry into World War II. Revisionist hypotheses were viewed for the most part as

⁴⁹ Tansill, *Back Door to War*, 629.

⁵⁰ Barnes (ed.), *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, viii-ix, 69, 502-52.

biased and unsound. Critical references to the Beard group were in vogue.

With the breakdown of bipartisanship around 1950, the beginning of a new "Great Debate," the development of neo-isolationism of the Hoover-Taft-Knowland variety, and the Republican campaign of 1952, revisionist interpretations found a somewhat more receptive environment. The Cold War tensions and insecurity encouraged the conviction that American entry into World War II had some aftereffects dangerous to American security. These developments were supplemented by a growth of political, economic, and intellectual conservatism that encouraged a more critical attitude toward Roosevelt's prewar domestic policies as well as his actions in foreign affairs. Revisionist volumes and articles were published in increasing numbers. Although most historians continued to express themselves sympathetically toward Roosevelt's foreign policies before Pearl Harbor, there was a more widespread inclination to question specific features of the internationalist interpretation. Internationalist historians, such as Feis, or Langer and Gleason, phrased their accounts in moderate, restrained, and qualified terms. At the same time some revisionist historians became less defensive and more positive in their phrasing. But the neo-isolationism of the early 1950's did not win the dominant position in popular thought or national policies. And revisionist interpretations still failed to gain a really large following among American historians.⁵¹ It well may be that the future attitudes of many historians and of the American people toward American entry into World War II will be shaped as much by the future course of the United States as by the evidence uncovered by historical research.

Historians need not speak disparagingly, however, of the results of their inquiries during a period of only fifteen years on the subject of American entry into World War II. A prodigious amount of research has been accomplished. The diplomatic and military phases have been examined with striking thoroughness within the limits of available sources. Important beginnings have been made in the study of other aspects of the subject. Both revisionist and internationalist writers have advanced provocative and stimulating interpretations and have buttressed them with impressive documentation.

Despite these major accomplishments, there are important deficiencies and much work remains. Individuals will vary widely in their evaluations of what has been done and what remains to be done, but many of the criticisms of existing studies (criticisms which suggest possible directions for future efforts) may be analyzed under two major headings. In the first place,

⁵¹ The analysis in this paragraph is not meant to suggest that all revisionists are "neo-isolationists" or conservative. But the growth of "neo-isolationism" and conservatism did provide a more receptive environment for their interpretations.

the narrow focus of most publications has left major areas almost untouched by serious historical research. Secondly — though the problem is probably incapable of final solution — there is need for a serious re-examination of the role and limitations of historical interpretation.

When measured by the standards of the “actualities” of pre-Pearl Harbor events, the scope and depth of available publications on American entry into World War II have been quite narrow in terms of time covered, subject matter, and source materials. Only a few books dealing specifically with this subject put it in the time context of the two World Wars. The volumes by Perkins, Chamberlin, Tansill, and Barnes all have this merit. Most studies of American entry into World War II, however, begin with 1940 or 1937. This point of departure is defensible if the scholar remains sensitively aware that he is examining only a tiny segment of the path that led to Pearl Harbor. Many historians, however, write almost as though the years from 1937 through 1941 were separated from and uninfluenced by earlier developments. For example, from a study of most available volumes a reader would not learn that these years were preceded by a devastating world depression with jolting economic, social, ideological, emotional, political, and power consequences that influenced the course of nations to December 7, 1941. Despite many important volumes and articles now available, there is much need for substantial research on foreign affairs in the years from 1921 to 1937. And a more meaningful perspective might be obtained if the subject were put in the broader context of the long-term but changing power relationships, industrialization of the world, the rise of the common man, and the development of secular ideologies designed to explain the mysteries of social, economic, and political changes whose ultimate form can only be dimly and imperfectly perceived.

Most published volumes are concerned largely with diplomatic, military, and some political aspects of the subject. The authors trace in intricate detail the policy planning, the minutiae of diplomatic exchanges, and the reactions of statesmen to the developments abroad. These phases are of major importance. They do not, however, constitute the whole story nor necessarily the most meaningful part. Economic, social, psychological, ethnic, religious, and political conditions that help to give direction and meaning to the diplomacy have been inadequately and imprecisely studied.

Political influences have been given much attention. Even the political analyses, however, often leave much to be desired when the subject is American entry into World War II. A good many historians on both sides have followed the almost standard procedure of charging individuals whose foreign policy views they do not like with partisan political motives. Writers on both sides often seem blind to political influences among those with

whom they sympathize.⁵² Political analysts also have directed their attention largely to the top administration, military, and diplomatic officials. There has been relatively little serious study of the influence of individual congressmen and of state political organizations on the nation's foreign policies before Pearl Harbor. Furthermore, most references to political figures — even the prominent administration leaders — are of a two-dimensional variety. There is need for thorough biographies of scores of individuals. Frank Freidel's excellent biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt, now being published, suggests the sort of work needed on countless other figures in the story.⁵³ Some important beginnings have been made, too, in studying sectional variations, but this subject has by no means been exhausted.⁵⁴

One need not be an economic determinist to be disturbed by the neglect of economic influences in existing histories of American entry into World War II. How did foreign policies affect those groups of persons who shared a particular economic interest? How did such effects influence the attitude of those groups toward foreign policy? What influence did those groups exert on policy making? Articles by John W. Masland and Roland N. Stromberg provide important beginnings on this phase of the subject, but much more remains to be done.⁵⁵

Samuel Lubell and John Norman have published studies on the foreign policy attitudes of German-Americans and Italian-Americans.⁵⁶ There is need, however, for additional research on the role of numerous ethnic and religious groups in the history of American foreign affairs before Pearl Harbor. Volumes have been published on such pressure groups as the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, the Fight for Freedom Committee, the America First Committee, and the American Legion.⁵⁷ But

⁵² For example, see Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor*, 327; Tansill, *Back Door to War*, 476-77; Langer and Gleason, *Undeclared War*, 574; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 367-68.

⁵³ Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (3 vols. to date, Boston, 1952-).

⁵⁴ George L. Grassmuck, *Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, 1951); Ralph H. Smuckler, "The Region of Isolationism," *American Political Science Review* (Menasha, Wis.), XLVII (June, 1953), 386-401; Jeannette P. Nichols, "The Middle West and the Coming of World War II," *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* (Columbus), LXII (April, 1953), 122-45; Wayne S. Cole, "America First and the South, 1940-1941," *Journal of Southern History* (Lexington, Ky.), XXII (February, 1956), 36-47.

⁵⁵ John W. Masland, "Commercial Influence upon American Far Eastern Policy, 1937-1941," *Pacific Historical Review*, XI (October, 1942), 281-99; Roland N. Stromberg, "American Business and the Approach of War, 1935-1941," *Journal of Economic History* (New York), XIII (Winter, 1953), 58-78.

⁵⁶ Samuel Lubell, "Who Votes Isolationist and Why," *Harper's Magazine* (New York), CCII (April, 1951), 29-36; John Norman, "Influence of Pro-Fascist Propaganda on American Neutrality, 1935-1936," in Dwight E. Lee and George E. McReynolds (eds.), *Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George Hubbard Blakeslee* (Worcester, 1949), 193-214.

⁵⁷ Johnson, *Battle against Isolation*; Cole, *America First*; Roscoe Baker, *The American*

studies are needed on the attitudes and influence of countless other organized pressure groups of all sorts on American foreign policies before Pearl Harbor. Several books and articles have analyzed the non-interventionists and interventionists — but neither of these groups has by any means been exhausted as a field for constructive historical research.⁵⁸

There has been almost no serious research on the influence of psychological and emotional factors. Both revisionists and internationalists write almost as though the actions of the key figures could all be explained in intellectual and rational terms. It is conceivable that historians could learn as much about American entry into World War II by studying the psychological and emotional make-up of the individuals involved, as by studying the phrasing of the diplomatic dispatches and state papers. Ralph K. White, Harold Lavine, and James Wechsler have published suggestive studies on the role of propaganda in pre-Pearl Harbor developments,⁵⁹ but for the most part the role of psychological influences on the attitudes of the American people and of American statesmen has scarcely been touched.

Results of the limited research on these non-diplomatic influences have seldom been integrated into the major works. Thomas A. Bailey's interpretative survey, *The Man in the Street*, contains more data on these phases of the subject than do any of the major volumes on American entry into World War II.⁶⁰ But his study is suggestive rather than definitive.

In addition to the narrowness of approach with regard to time span and subject matter, there has been a narrowness in terms of the source materials used. If the focus of the subject matter is to be broadened as suggested in this article, historians will have to demonstrate a high degree of ingenuity in tapping additional source materials — including manuscripts in private hands. This appeal for greater breadth and depth is not meant to disparage the work thus far completed. But much of great importance remains to be done by scholars on the subject of American involvement in the war.

Legion and American Foreign Policy (New York, 1954). See also Robert Edwin Bowers, "The American Peace Movement, 1933-1941," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1949).

⁵⁸ Johnson, *Battle against Isolation*; Cole, *America First*; Smuckler, "Region of Isolationism," *American Political Science Review*, XLVII (June, 1953), 386-401; Lubell, "Who Votes Isolationist and Why," *Harper's*, CCII (April, 1951), 29-36; John C. Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," *World Politics* (New Haven), III (April, 1951), 299-316; William Appleman Williams, "The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's," *Science and Society* (New York), XVIII (Winter, 1954), 1-20.

⁵⁹ Ralph K. White, "Hitler, Roosevelt, and the Nature of War Propaganda," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (Albany), XLIV (April, 1949), 157-74; Harold Lavine and James Wechsler, *War Propaganda and the United States* (New Haven, 1940).

⁶⁰ *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York, 1948).

Montaigne's assertion that "nothing is so firmly believed as what we least know" suggests a second deficiency in most major volumes on American entry into World War II. The most heated controversies among historians do not center on those matters for which the facts and truth can be determined with greatest certainty. The interpretative controversies, on the contrary, rage over questions about which the historian is least able to determine truth. Despite the thousands of documents and tons of manuscripts, the written record and the physical remains constitute only a tiny fraction of the reality of America's course toward World War II — and these remains do not necessarily represent the "truth."

With the relatively inexact methods and incomplete data at his command, even the finest historian can often make only semi-informed guesses concerning motives, causes, and wisdom of pre-Pearl Harbor decisions. As Herbert Butterfield phrased it, the historian "can never quite carry his enquiries to that innermost region where the final play of motive and the point of responsibility can be decided. . . . He does not study human nature, therefore, in the way that an omniscient deity might observe it, with an eye that pierces our unspoken intentions, our thick folds of insincerity and the motives that we hardly avow to ourselves."⁶¹ The historian can determine that certain events preceded American entry into World War II and he may find circumstantial evidence suggesting possible causal relationships. But he cannot conduct controlled experiments to measures with any degree of certainty the causal significance of antecedent developments and incidents. Furthermore, these various interpretations of individual historians are based upon different opinions concerning the wisdom of possible pre-Pearl Harbor policies as judged in terms of certain criteria, such as world peace and security, American peace and security, economic order and prosperity, and freedom and democracy. As Sumner Welles phrased it, "The wisdom of any foreign policy can generally be determined only by its results."⁶² But in order to measure this wisdom, the results of policies that were actually followed would have to be compared with the results of possible alternative policies that were not followed. It is, of course, impossible to run controlled experiments to determine what would have happened if alternative policies had been followed. Furthermore, the possible alternatives were not necessarily of the simple "either/or" variety. The path to Pearl Harbor was filled with millions of decisions, great and small, each based upon other decisions which preceded it. There were countless forks in the road that led to Pearl Harbor. And no historian can know for certain what lay at the end of the paths that were not followed.

⁶¹ Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (New York, 1951), 116-17.

⁶² Welles, *Time for Decision*, 288.

Writers on both sides, of course, are conscious of limitations inherent in historical interpretation. All of them qualify their generalizations with references to the inadequacy of their sources. But they recognize the limitations more clearly when referring to interpretations with which they do not agree. Sanborn, a revisionist, wrote that the internationalists' "first line of defense has always rested and still rests upon a foundation blended of faith, emotion, and hypothesis."⁶³ Dexter Perkins, on the other side, has written that revisionism is "shot through with passion and prejudice. . . . It also rests upon hypotheses which . . . cannot be demonstrated."⁶⁴ To a certain extent both Sanborn and Perkins are correct. But their generalizations apply in varying degree to books on *both* sides in the interpretative controversy.

Probably no one would want the historian to refrain from interpreting the course of events simply because he cannot scientifically prove the truth of his interpretations. The historian could not avoid some degree of interpretation even if he tried. Inadequate though his analyses may be, who is better qualified to perform the function? Both revisionist and internationalist historians have a responsibility to attempt to explain American entry into World War II as they understand it.

Nevertheless, considering the incompleteness and inexactness of their knowledge and understanding, historians do not seem justified in the cavalier, dogmatic tone that they so frequently use. They base their interpretations in part on a personal faith in the wisdom of the policies they support. Like devout believers in less secular faiths, writers on both sides tend to be intolerant of conflicting beliefs. This may not be true of all writers on the subject, but it does apply in varying degree to many on both sides. Historians need to emphasize the limits of their knowledge as well as the expansiveness of it. There is need for more awareness of the tentative nature of human inquiry, for self-criticism and the humility of an Albert Einstein, rather than the positive, dogmatic, self-righteousness of the propagandist. Perhaps in the furious twentieth-century struggle for men's minds there can be no real place for moderation and restraint — even in historical interpretation. Numerous critics, however, both here and abroad, are fearful of the immaturity of American attitudes towards international affairs. If the historian is sensitive to the many-sided complexities of issues and demonstrates intellectual humility and ideological tolerance, perhaps others, influenced by his example, may be less inclined to grasp at simplified, crusading, utopian theories regarding contemporary international affairs.

⁶³ Barnes (ed.), *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, 190.

⁶⁴ Perkins, "Was Roosevelt Wrong?" *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXX (Summer, 1954), 372.

HARRY TRUMAN AND THE ENDURING NEW DEAL

During the last fifteen months of his life, Franklin Roosevelt enunciated his economic bill of rights and, according to the memoirs of his friend and associate Samuel Rosenman, began to sound out Wendell Willkie about the possibility of joining forces in the formation of a new party coalition. Coming as they did so close to Roosevelt's fourth bid for the Presidency, it is possible that both of these events were no more than shrewd political maneuvers. It is more likely, however, that they were indications of something far more important: that Roosevelt was convinced of the need for further reform in the postwar era and that he understood the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of achieving such reforms without some reconstruction of the political parties as they then existed. In a sense, Roosevelt may have anticipated what was to become the most serious criticism of him as a reform President: that he left behind him neither the blueprints nor the political machinery for the protection and extension of New Deal reforms. "When Roosevelt was asked once for his philosophy," Alfred Kazin wrote in 1959, "he replied testily: 'I am a Christian and a Democrat.' This was the legacy passed on to him, and was purely personal; it was not one he could hand on to his successors. And in fact, he has no disciples, only admirers."

Certainly Roosevelt would have faced many of the same problems that beset Harry Truman after the war. The Democratic party was badly divided. The Congressional desire to assert itself against executive authority, which had plagued Roosevelt in the late 'thirties, was resumed and intensified following the necessary wartime expansion of Presidential power. Roosevelt's oft-praised eclectic approach and his refusal or inability to base his reform program upon any well-articulated philosophical or ideological base made it difficult to convince the nation of the need to integrate new reforms within the New Deal framework. All these factors fed the increasing deadlock between Congress and the Executive on domestic matters, which had first been manifest during Roosevelt's second administration and which was to continue throughout the postwar era. (For a discussion of this stalemate, see J. M. Burns, *The Deadlock of Democracy* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963].)

In addition to these difficulties, the Truman administration was forced to deal with a continuing series of international crises that ab-

sorbed much of its energies and helped to create an atmosphere inimical to reform. It was, in fact, quite commonly asserted during the Truman years that the President made a conscious decision to sacrifice domestic issues to the needs of foreign policy; that it was in the latter sphere that he made his best appointments, took his most decisive steps, and performed his most original work.

Richard E. Neustadt, Professor of Political Science at Columbia University, who served as one of President Truman's advisers, indicates in the following article that although the international situation helped to condition Truman's domestic policies, the Truman administration cannot be explained quite so simply. President Truman, as Neustadt illustrates, did seek to continue the reform policies of his predecessor. One might go even further and argue that both Truman's triumphs and his defeats reveal much about the achievements and failures of the New Deal itself. Truman was eminently successful in maintaining and even strengthening most of the basic New Deal measures. His major setbacks occurred whenever he sought to extend reform into new areas such as race relations and medical care, or when he attempted to fundamentally alter a New Deal program, as in agriculture. There was to be no wholesale repudiation of the Roosevelt reforms, but neither was there to be meaningful extension of them. The battles that had already been fought would have to be fought again if such extension of the New Deal reforms were to come to pass. This situation was created not only by the mood and conditions of the postwar years, but also by the deep division within Democratic party ranks, the Congressional deadlock, and the lack of a reform ideology — all of which were part of the legacy of the New Deal. Franklin Roosevelt, it might be argued, was as much an architect of the stalemate that characterized postwar America as were any of his successors.

Mario Einaudi, *The Roosevelt Revolution* (New York, 1959), argues for the basic continuity between the New and Fair Deals. Although the history of the Truman administration is still to be written, interesting accounts may be found in J. Daniels, *The Man of Independence* (New York, 1950), A. Steinberg, *The Man from Missouri* (New York, 1962), and Truman's own memoirs, *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, 1955), and *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, 1956).

Congress and the Fair Deal: A Legislative Balance Sheet

RICHARD E. NEUSTADT

On September 6, 1945, three weeks after V-J Day, Harry S. Truman sent to Congress a twenty-one point program of domestic legislation — his first comprehensive venture in home affairs since Franklin Roosevelt's death five months before. This marked the beginning of a long series of Presidential proposals for Congressional action in the fields of economic development and social welfare; proposals which streamed out of the White House for nearly seven years, from the first session of the 79th Congress through the second session of the 82nd; a legislative program which became each year more comprehensive, more organized, more definite, receiving after 1948, the distinction of a label: The Fair Deal.

Looking back upon this enterprise, this Fair Deal program and its fortunes in those years, no less an observer than Elmer Davis has ventured the following verdict:

All in all, in domestic affairs, Mr. Truman was an unsuccessful President. [He] presented . . . a liberal program which was coherent and logical as the New Deal had never been. Congress, not being liberal, refused to take it; yet every year he persisted in offering it all to them again and they still wouldn't take it. . . . Truman kept asking for all of it and getting none of it.¹

This retrospective vision of the President who never changed his pace and of the Congress never altering in opposition is no doubt widely shared these days. No doubt, there is an element of reality behind it. Certainly, President Truman held out for more than he could reasonably hope to gain; certainly his four Congresses persisted in frustrating many of his aims.

Yet in its bold relief and simple black and white, this vision of the Truman record misses much light and shadow in a very complex situation. And by virtue of its very sharpness and simplicity, it becomes a stumbling block to understanding and appraisal. Students of post-war politics and of the Presidency, and Congress, have need to start their march through Truman's

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¹ Elmer Davis, "Harry S. Truman and the Verdict of History," *The Reporter*, February 3, 1953.

years with a more elaborate guide to the terrain than this quick characterization can supply.

It is much too soon, of course, for the definitive appraisal of the Fair Deal legislative program, its fundamental emphasis and purposes, its ultimate success or failure. But it is not too soon to go behind neat generalizations and draw a balance on the record as it stood when Truman left the White House. What was attempted, what accomplished, what lost? And more important still, what seem now, at this reading, to have been the underlying motivations, the determinative circumstances? These are the questions to which this essay is addressed.

A GENERAL NOTE ON CONGRESS — 1945 TO 1952

Before turning to the Fair Deal, as such, something need be said by way of background about the work load and the composition of the four Congresses which Truman faced as President.

These were the Congresses of post-war reconstruction and cold war and Korea. For seven successive years their sessions tackled and put through an extraordinary series of Administration measures in the fields of international cooperation, collective security and national defense; a series which for scope and scale and continuity has no precedent in our history.

On no previous occasion has American foreign policy required — much less received — comparable Congressional participation for such a span of time. Rarely before, save at the onset of our greatest wars, has the Congress broken so much new and unfamiliar ground; rarely, if ever, has momentum been so long sustained.

One thinks of Franklin Roosevelt's first four years, and the legislative break-through into broad new areas of Federal action here at home. We look back on that as a revolution — a stunning departure from the traditional limitations of pre-depression years. So, too, were these post-war programs revolutionary — shattering all manner of shibboleths and precedents, in the international sphere untouchable right up to World War II. And what stands out historically is a record of immense accomplishment, in legislative terms, both for the Administration that framed the measures and for the Congresses that put them through.

The record becomes still more impressive when one recalls that President Truman never did command a "safe" working majority of the rank and file in either House of Congress. His "honeymoon" did not outlast the war. There was no bloc of "Truman men," sufficient for his purposes, on which he could rely to follow through, without cavil, whatever leads he gave. Rather, the thing was done through that extraordinary phenomenon, post-

war "bipartisanship," a carefully conceived and executed coalition launched by Roosevelt, husbanded by Truman, actively furthered by effective leadership in the Congressional power centers of both parties.

This enterprise was in its way as distinctive an achievement, for both President and Congress, as the roster of enactments which it helped to frame and legislate. Of course, the idyl of bipartisanship did not last forever. But even in 1952, the "internationalist" alignment, though reduced in strength by mass Republican defections — and some Democratic backsliding as well — remained a strong bi-factional, if not bipartisan reality, producing — in support of foreign policy — majorities, however bare, which could not have been mustered for a moment behind most Fair Deal domestic programs.

This raises a crucial point: the internationalist coalition, which supported Truman's foreign policy, existed, cheek by jowl, with a "conservative" coalition, which opposed Administration policies at home. What's more, the two most vital elements in the conservative alignment, were also chief participants in the internationalist bloc — the "moderates" of both parties; the Vandenberg Midwest Republicans and the Russell Southern Democrats.

These were the swing groups, joining the "Fair Dealers" to beat off the "extremists" of both parties in their raids on foreign programs; joining the extremists in opposition to most of the Fair Dealers' pet proposals at home. Internationalism combined with conservatism was the formula which kept two coalitions going, side by side, through issue after issue, Congress after Congress.

A great deal happened after 1949, to sap the strength of the internationalist coalition. On the personality side, of course, came Vandenberg's illness and death, Connally's advancing age, Acheson's unpopularity. Deeper down were the accumulating frustrations of twenty Democratic years, capped with "Communism, Corruption, Korea" — and China; mercilessly exploited by Congressional Republicans made desperate after 1948 and cured, thereby, of any faith in "high level" politics, or the "me-too" approach. In addition, after 1950, after Korea, came a development which threatened the whole basis of compatibility between internationalism and conservatism: the full cost of our commitments in the world — in dollars and in human terms as well — took on a new and frightening dimension. Conservatism and internationalism began to come unstuck, to war with one another. And if the Democratic "moderates" — taken as a whole — did not react as sharply or as soon as the Republicans who buried Vandenberg, this may be taken, partly, as a tribute to party loyalties and hopes for 1952.

Taking Truman's four Congresses together, in all these terms of work

load and alignment, three further observations are in order. First, had no more been attempted or accomplished, by way of major, controversial, forward measures, than the great landmarks in the international and mobilization fields alone, we would still have to grant, in retrospect, that these were busy and productive years of legislation for the Congress — outstanding years, by pre-war standards.

Moreover, whatever else might have been tried, on the domestic front, there was no time, from 1945 to 1952, when Truman's Administration — given its foreign policy and the international situation from year to year — could afford to trade a major objective in the foreign field for some advantage in the domestic. Consistently, it was, and had to be, the other way around.

Finally, considering the integral relationships between the "internationalist" coalition which supported Truman and the conservative coalition which opposed him, every major venture in home affairs was bound to complicate the progress, endanger the timetable of those all-important measures in his foreign policy. From his first days in office, when he reaffirmed Roosevelt's arrangements for Republican participation in the San Francisco Conference, Truman acknowledged his dependence, in the foreign field, on elements of the anti-New Deal coalition — an enterprise which, always potent after 1937, had spent the wartime "truce" maturing its relations, building its lines and thwarting FDR on secondary issues.

Why, then, did Truman press a host of "hot" Fair Deal domestic issues, sure to arouse the wrath of this entrenched conservative alignment? To this question there is no single, easy answer, but rather a whole series, arising out of motivations and responses which varied with circumstance, over the years. To get at these we need now turn to straight, historical review, beginning with the first Truman "inventory" of legislative needs in home affairs — the twenty-one point program of 1945.

TO REAFFIRM THE ROOSEVELT PURPOSE: 1945-46

The original "twenty-one point" program went to Congress by special message on September 6, 1945. Then, within a ten-week span, the President sent Congress six more special messages, each adding a major new proposal to the September list. In January 1946, Truman again presented a "twenty-one point" program, in a radio appeal to the country, reiterated three weeks later in his annual message to the Congress. This second listing was somewhat different from the first. Most of September's minor points had been removed from the enumeration to make room, among the twenty-one, for measures recommended in October and November. And in the annual

message there was discussion of additional proposals — over and above the list of twenty-one — which had not previously been mentioned at all.²

In summarizing the domestic program which Truman set forth after V-J Day, it makes no sense at all to attach significance to order or to timing of particular proposals in this confusing sequence. Obviously some things were ready, came to mind, or got approval earlier than others. Obviously, also, these were the days of scatter-shot approach, when everything was put on record fast, in a sort of laundry-listing of post-war requirements with little indication of priority or emphasis.

What counts, here, is that between September 1945 and January 1946, Truman staked out for himself and his Administration, a sweeping legislative program in the fields of social welfare and economic development, embracing, in essential outline if not in all details, the whole range of measures we now identify with the Fair Deal.

Nearly everything was there, though later formulations were to alter some specifics. Among September's numbered "points" were full employment legislation, expanded unemployment compensation, the permanent FEPC, an increased minimum wage, comprehensive housing legislation, a National Science Foundation, grants for hospital construction, permanent farm price supports, and — less specifically — protection and assistance for small business and expanded public works for resource conservation and development.

To these, the "points" of January's message added a comprehensive health program — including health insurance — nationalization of atomic energy and development of the St. Lawrence project. In addition, the message stressed, though it did not number, a "thorough-going reconsideration of our social security laws"; financial aid "to assist the states in assuring more nearly equal opportunities for . . . education"; an emergency veterans housing program "now under preparation"; and various kind words for statehood or self-government in the territories and insular possessions and the District of Columbia. Finally, of course, there were appropriate exhortations about extending price and rent controls.³

² The dates of these messages are as follows: October 3, 1945 (St. Lawrence Seaway and atomic energy); October 23 (universal training); November 19 (health insurance); December 3 (fact finding machinery for labor disputes); December 19 (unification of the armed forces); January 3, 1946 (fireside chat); January 21 (combined State of the Union and Budget Message).

³ This list represents only a selection of the items mentioned in the several messages. These are conceived to be the issues which, one way or another, became identified with Truman as "Fair Dealer." It is, therefore, on these that we seek to draw a "balance sheet." As for other measures proposed by the President, such as Federal aid to highways and airports, unification of the armed forces, et al., these were certainly part of Truman's program, but scarcely part of the "Fair Deal" at least as the term was generally understood by politicians, press and public.

This was the program Truman threw at Congress, the moment the war was won. Roosevelt had supplanted "Dr. New Deal" with "Dr. Win-the-War." Why then did Truman hurry so to call the old physician in again?

Look back two years, to January 1944, and part of the answer becomes plain. Remember Roosevelt's "Economic Bill of Rights," with which he opened that election year, the year of hoped-for victory in Europe and feared post-war depression here at home:

The right to a useful and remunerative job. . . .

The right to earn enough. . . .

The right of every farmer to . . . a decent living.

The right of every businessman . . . to trade in . . . freedom from unfair competition. . . .

The right of every family to a decent home.

The right to adequate medical care. . . .

The right to adequate protection from . . . fears of old age, sickness, accident and unemployment.

The right to a good education.

All these rights spell security. And after the war is won, we must be prepared to move forward in the implementation of these rights. . . .⁴

Truman was thus reasserting Roosevelt's stated purpose; not in so many words, not necessarily in Roosevelt's way, or with his means, or his specifics — or his men — but consciously and definitely this was for Truman an affirmation of fidelity to the cause and the direction of liberal Democracy; rekindling the social outlook of the New Deal, if not, precisely, of the New Dealers.

The legislative program of 1945 was a reminder to the Democratic party, to the Congress, to the country, that there was continuity between the new national leadership and the old — and not merely in war policy, but in peace policy as well; not only overseas, but here at home.

Beyond this, the new President had a very personal stake in his September message: reaffirmation of his own philosophy, his own commitments, his own social outlook; denial of the complacent understandings, the comfortable assertions that now, with "That Man" gone, the White House would be "reasonable," "sound" and "safe." Harry Truman wanted, as he used to say, to separate the "men" from the "boys" among his summertime supporters. V-J Day brought him his first real chance to think or act in terms of home affairs, and he lost no time in straightening out the record on who he was and what he stood for.

Some of the New Dealers may not have been convinced; conservatives, however, were quick to understand that here, at least on paper, was a

⁴ State of the Union Message, January 11, 1944.

mortal challenge. Editors glowered; so did Congressmen. And one of the President's "soundest" advisors, who ornamented the Administration in that capacity from first to last, fought to the point of threatened resignation against sending that "socialistic" message to the Congress.⁵

Here, then, is explanation for the character and over-all direction of Truman's program. But what of its specific scope and range? Granting all this, why was so much territory covered all at once; why so many points; why, in fields like health and housing, go "all out" in a single bite?

Most commentators have seen these things simply as errors in tactics and judgment, charging them off to personal idiosyncrasy, or inexperience. Other Presidents, it is said, would never have concocted so diverse a program, or asked, indiscriminately, for everything at once.⁶ But something more was operating here than just the human factor, however significant that may have been. We have no means of knowing what Roosevelt would have done, after the war. But we do know that he had made the "Economic Bill of Rights" an issue in the 1944 campaign — with Truman as his running mate. And in one of his last major campaign addresses, Roosevelt came out strongly, if in general terms, for most of the controversial measures Truman, a year later, urged on Congress.⁷

We also know that in the post-war period, a Democratic President was bound to face a fundamentally different situation, a different set of popular alignments and demands than Roosevelt dealt with in the thirties. Then, the New Deal pioneered, releasing a flood of ideas and impulses for reform that had been dammed up since Wilson's time. And every effort in those years, each new program, every experiment, set into motion a widening circle of needs and expectations for governmental action — and of organized interest groups to defend the gains and voice the new requirements.

The first Roosevelt Administration broke into virgin territory; the Truman Administration had to deal with the demand for its consolidation and development. Clearly, Roosevelt was aware of this in 1944. Clearly, Truman's sweeping program in 1945 was conceived as a response. And not alone in

⁵ This is indicative of a sharp cleavage of opinion in the circle of advisers immediately around the President, involving much argumentation against the proposed post V-J Day program.

⁶ See note 5. Also, the following quotation is illustrative: "Franklin Roosevelt knew how to drive for one thing at a time. . . . He would pave the way for a statute . . . when a proposal reached Congress the answers were ready . . . and publicity had already been set to work. . . ." Binkley, W. E. *President & Congress* (1947), p. 278.

⁷ Address at Soldiers' Field, Chicago, Illinois, October 28, 1944.

Speaking at a "Truman-Barkley Dinner" in Washington, January 18, 1949, President Truman remarked ". . . I had not much cooperation after September the sixth, 1945, for the simple reason that at that time I enunciated the principles of the Democratic platform of 1944, which I had helped to write and on which I had been elected with the President of the United States."

1945; from first to last, the Fair Deal legislative program sought to express the vastly heightened expectations of those groups of Americans on which the liberal cause depended for support.

For all these reasons, then, the 79th Congress found itself encumbered with a great, diverse collection of proposals from the President. And what did Congress do? Not very much. This was the Congress elected with the Roosevelt-Truman ticket in 1944. But even before Roosevelt's death, it had shown little disposition to follow the White House lead in home affairs. At the very start of the first session, the conservative coalition got the bit between its teeth and almost overturned Henry Wallace's appointment as Secretary of Commerce. From then on, the coalition remained a power to be reckoned with, its temper not improved by Truman's exhortations, its influence culminating, finally, in emasculation of the price control extender, during the summer of 1946.

From the confusions, irritations and forebodings of defeat, which marked the whole course of its second session, the 79th Congress did produce a number of the major measures Truman had proposed — most notably the Employment Act, the Atomic Energy Act, the Hospital Construction Act and the Veterans Emergency Housing Act. The Congress was not ungenerous in authorizing and appropriating funds for reclamation, flood control, power and soil conservation; these also raised some landmarks on the Fair Deal road. But for the rest, at least in terms of final action, Congress stood still, or even "backslid" here and there — as with the Russell Amendment eliminating the wartime FEPC.

Perhaps, if experience over the months had not dispelled the spectre of post-war unemployment, much more might have been done with Truman's program of September, 1945. But as it was, this turned out to be the least of worries for most Congressmen and their constituents back home. Not job shortages, but strikes, not pay envelopes but price regulations bothered both. The country, like the Congress, far from rallying to Presidential visions of a better future, reacted negatively against the irritations of the present, and punished Truman's party with its worst Congressional defeat in eighteen years.

TO PILLORY THE OPPOSITION: 1947-48

To gauge the impact of the 1946 election on the attitude and outlook of the Truman Administration, one merely has to contrast the President's address to the incoming 80th Congress, with his wide-ranging message and radio appeal of the preceding year.⁸

⁸ The 1947 State of the Union Message was delivered January 9, followed, two days later, by the first Economic Report under the new Employment Act.

The change in tone was very marked. In the annual messages of 1947 domestic affairs were relatively played down; domestic recommendations limited to a few specifics and some gently-phrased, general remarks. In his State of the Union Message, Truman gave more emphasis to budget balancing (e.g., no tax relief) than to any "welfare" measure, save the comprehensive housing program — which had Senator Taft among its sponsors. He also did "urge" action on the balance of his 1945 health program, but not under the heading of "major policies requiring the attention of the Congress."⁹ And while brief mention was made of social security, minimum wages and resource development, it is clear from the context that these, too, were relegated to some secondary category.¹⁰

This was the comparatively mild and qualified domestic program which the President presented to a supremely confident opposition Congress, where he was generally regarded — on both sides of the aisle — as an historical curiosity, a holdover, a mere chair warmer by accident of constitution, for two more years. The view was widely shared. Inside the Administration, many, perhaps most, of Truman's advisers were persuaded, if not that all was over, at least that the post-war reaffirmation of the liberal cause had been a crashing failure at the polls — out of fashion with the public, out of date for officeholders.

The counsels of caution and conservatism within the President's own entourage, muffled somewhat since the fall of 1945, were now heard everywhere, voiced by almost everybody. Whatever Truman's own views may have been, the course of his Administration through much of 1947 seemed to display real hesitancy, real indecisiveness about further assertion of the cause he had so vigorously espoused a year before.

It is true that as the spring wore on, the White House sent up certain special messages along reminiscent lines. In May, another health message repeated the proposals of 1945 — but the tone was mild and the issue, then, by no means so inflammable as it was to become in later years.¹¹ In June, the President vigorously protested inadequacies in the rent control extender and called again for a comprehensive housing program — but this included specific indorsement for Senator Taft's own bill.¹²

Lump these reminders in with the rest, and Truman's domestic program

⁹ The five items under this heading, in addition to the budget and housing, included generalizations about farm welfare and competitive enterprise along with specific proposals for a study of labor-management relations and for limited changes in the Wagner Act.

¹⁰ The Economic Report lumped these and other matters into a "long-range" program. Its "short-range" recommendations included only one new item besides the five "major policies" in the earlier message: namely, cost-of-living increases for social security beneficiaries.

¹¹ The date of the message was May 19, 1947.

¹² Message on signing the Housing and Rent Act, June 30, 1947.

in the spring of 1947 still remains a very conciliatory version of what had gone before. Under the initial impact of defeat, the Administration, clearly, had fallen way back to regroup. And with the Truman Doctrine to be implemented that same spring, by that same opposition Congress, it is no wonder there was hesitation and divided counsel about where to take a stand and when, if ever, to resume the forward march.

Yet, scarcely a year later, Harry Truman was back at the old stand, once again, raising old banners, rubbing salt in old wounds, firing broadsides at Congress more aggressively than ever. What happened here? Wherefore the change from the conciliatory tone of 1947 to the uncompromising challenge of 1948? Obviously, somewhere along the line, the President became convinced that his initial impulse had been correct, that he was right in 1945 — that the New Deal tradition, brought up to date, remained good policy — and good politics — despite the set back of 1946. In this decision, Truman's temperament, his social outlook, all sorts of subjective factors, no doubt played a part. But also, in the course of 1947 there appeared some perfectly objective indications that a renewed offensive would be not merely "natural" but rational.

Twice, in the early summer of 1947, Truman vetoed tax reductions voted by the Congress.¹³ Both times he charged that the reductions were inequitable and ill-timed; that they relieved only upper income groups, and would add new burdens of inflation for the rest to bear. Both times there was some stirring of approval and response around the country — both times his veto was sustained.

In point of fact, these vetoes were no new departure. They had been foreshadowed from the first by warnings in the annual messages. But the actuality of veto, and the words in which expressed, did convey a fresh impression: the vision of a sturdy President — courageous even in the face of lower taxes — defending the "national" interest and the "poor," against a heartless (Republican) Congress mindful only of the "rich." This was a new note — and it did not go badly.

Four days after his first tax veto, Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act.¹⁴ To the general public, the measure was chiefly notable, then and since, because it did something about work stoppages in "national emergency" disputes — an issue the President himself had recognized in prior messages to Congress.¹⁵ But to the spokesmen for organized labor the act was shot full of unwarrantable interferences with basic union rights which had been guaranteed, by law, for half a generation.

¹³ H.R. 1, vetoed June 16, 1947; H.R. 3950, vetoed July 18, 1947.

¹⁴ H.R. 3020, vetoed June 20, 1947.

¹⁵ See notes 2 and 9.

And when Truman struck out against these interferences — in the strongest language he had yet addressed to the 80th Congress — he evoked a warm response from a part of the public whose apathy, in 1946, had prominently helped defeat his party and his post-war cause. The quick Congressional override of Truman's veto merely heightened this response from those who felt themselves despoiled — and further dramatized, for them, the vision of the Presidential “tribune” standing up against the onslaughts of a rapacious (Republican) Congress.

Here, in the summer of 1947, were some straws in the wind. Their meaning was confirmed for the Administration, even enlarged upon, at the special session in the fall.

When Truman called the Congress back to Washington, the principal emergency was international — with the economies of Western Europe verging on collapse. But in his address to the special session, Truman asked not only for interim aid abroad — pending completion of the European Recovery Program — but also for a ten-point program against inflation, billed as an equal emergency at home. And the tenth point of this domestic plan was nothing less than selective restoration of price and wage controls.¹⁶

This was the first occasion when Truman made an all-out public effort to revive and dramatize an issue which had failed him in 1946, capitalizing on a measure which — as everybody knew — was still anathema to the majority in Congress. This was the first occasion, too, since the election of 1946, when the President presumed to give so controversial a domestic issue equal billing with an essential aspect of his foreign policy.

The program for the 1947 special session was, no doubt, a trial run, in a sense. Had the result been very bad, the President might perhaps have stayed his hand in 1948. In the event, however, the majority in Congress found it expedient to enact something called an “anti-inflation” bill, a most limited measure but indicating that times — and prices — had changed since 1946.¹⁷ Moreover, despite the patent irritations which the price issue aroused, interim aid for Europe went through Congress without a hitch, and just before adjournment, the European Recovery Program was sent up and well received.¹⁸

By January, 1948, the President had obviously read the signs and portents of the half year before, and put out of mind the memory of defeat in 1946, with all the cautious counsels it provoked. Truman's address to the new session was confident and sharp, evoking all the liberal issues half suppressed a year before. His presentation was much more coherent than it had been

¹⁶ The date of this message was November 17, 1947.

¹⁷ The Taft-Wolcott bill, S. J. Res. 167.

¹⁸ The program was submitted December 19, 1947.

in 1945 or 1946, the language tighter, the focus sharper, the follow-up firmer. But nothing was omitted from the original post-war program and in a number of respects Truman went beyond any earlier commitments.¹⁹

This was the message which set forth goals for the decade ahead. This was the message which proposed a new, "anti-inflationary" tax program: credits for low income groups to offset the cost of living, with revenues to be recouped by increased levies on corporate profits.

The "tribune" of six months before, who had risen to protect the people against the acts of Congress, now sought their protection in demands on Congress for actions it could not, or would not, take. If the record of Congress could be turned against the opposition, then the President would make that record, not on performance, but on non-performance, not on the opposition's issues but on his issues — those liberal measures which, perhaps, had not gone out of fashion after all.

And as Truman began, so he continued through the spring, with "a message a week," to keep Congress off balance and the spotlight on.²⁰ In this series there was but one great new formulation — the civil rights message of February, 1948. The legislative program it set forth incorporated most of the proposals of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, which had reported in December 1947.²¹ The resulting explosion is still echoing in Congress and the Democratic Party.

Of all Truman's proposals through eight years in office, these were, perhaps, the most controversial. That they loosed a lasting political storm, everyone knows; that they had special political significance in early 1948 — appearing just as Henry Wallace made his break to the Progressive Party — is certainly no secret. But there was much more than politics in this. The Civil Rights Committee had originally been established out of genuine concern lest there be repeated in the post-war years, the rioting and retrogres-

¹⁹ The State of the Union message was delivered January 7, 1948; the Economic Report, January 14, 1948.

²⁰ The more significant special messages were as follows: February 2 (civil rights); February 23 (rent control and housing); March 1 (reciprocal trade renewal); March 17 (European recovery and national defense); April 30 (offshore oil veto); May 14 (farm program); May 24 (social security); May 26 (aid to education).

Note that the cumulative impact of these messages — indeed of the whole Truman offensive — would have been very considerably diluted had not the House leadership frustrated Senator Taft's own program for Congressional achievement, as expressed in Senate passage of his aid to education and comprehensive housing bills. The last of these was in the form of a letter to the Speaker of the House.

²¹ The Committee was created December 5, 1946, by Executive order 9808. The main recommendations adopted by the President included a permanent commission on civil rights, a "compulsory" FEPC, anti-lynching and poll tax laws, strengthening of civil rights statutes and of government enforcement machinery. Also included in the Presidential program were certain earlier Administration proposals of a somewhat different nature: statehood for Hawaii and Alaska, self government for Puerto Rico, Guam and Samoa, and home rule for the District of Columbia.

sion which followed World War I. Congressional indifference had been made manifest in 1946 — hence the turn to prominent outsiders. Once having set these people to their task, on problems so potentially explosive, it is hardly credible that Truman could have ignored their report, no matter what the politics of his own situation.

Nothing else, half so dramatic, was unveiled by the President in 1948. But all the older measures were furbished up and trotted out anew. And as the months wore on, Truman's tone to Congress grew steadily more vigorous. He began by lambasting in January, and ended by lampooning in July.

His last address to the 80th Congress was the nearest thing to an outright campaign speech that he — or probably any other President — ever made before the assembled Houses.²² Opening the post-convention special session, he first demanded action to stop inflation and start more houses — the ostensible purposes for which Congress had been recalled. He then proceeded to list nine other measures which he thought the Congress might be able to enact without delaying the two primary items. Finally he listed every other major proposal advanced since 1945, commenting: “. . . If this Congress finds time to act on any of them now, the country will greatly benefit. Certainly, the next Congress should take them up immediately.”²³

Of course, that hapless session accomplished precisely nothing, in any of these categories. And Truman proceeded to pillory the 80th Congress at every whistle stop across the country, working his way to victory in the Presidential election of 1948.

TOWARD A LIBERAL MAJORITY: 1949-50

The legislative program Harry Truman presented in 1949, to the new Congress which had shared his victory, reflected all the Fair Deal commitments of the 1948 campaign. “Certainly, the next Congress should take them up immediately,” he had proclaimed to the Republicans in July. And he could do no less in January than spread them out — all of them — before his brand-new Democratic majorities.²⁴

²² The “Turnip Day” address, July 27, 1948, delivered two weeks after Truman's nomination by the Democratic Convention.

²³ In the secondary category Truman mentioned, among others, aid to education (S. 472) had passed the Senate April 1), minimum wage increases, increased social security benefits, appropriations for the TVA steam plant, and civil rights measures.

In his final category Truman specified “. . . a comprehensive health program, based on health insurance; a fair and sound management-labor relations law in place of the Taft-Hartley Act . . . which should be repealed; a real long range farm program; . . . a science foundation; strengthened anti-trust laws, and approval of the St. Lawrence Waterway.”

²⁴ The State of the Union Message was dated January 4, 1949; the Economic Report, January 7, 1949. Between them they called for all the specifics urged on the 80th Con-

All interest groups and sponsoring politicians understood the "law of honeymoon"; none was prepared to stand aside, leaving a pet proposal for some later, less naturally advantageous date. All civil rights groups, and most politicians North and South, knew very well that only the extra leverage of an early log jam would suffice, in time, to shut off debate. All trade union spokesmen were agreed that there could be no compromise on Taft-Hartley "repeal" and no delay on any part of it. And so it went, group after group, issue after issue.

Both President and Congress were thus prisoners, in a sense, of the election and the way it had been won.²⁵ It was one thing to throw a host of highly controversial measures at an opposition Congress which could — and did — reject most of them out of hand. It was quite another thing to throw the same load on a relatively receptive Congress, prepared to make a try at action on them all. Action is much harder than inaction; action on this scale, of this variety, an almost intolerable burden on the complex machinery of the legislative process — and on a President's capacity to focus attention, to rally support.

Despite this handicap, the 81st Congress, be it said, turned out more New Deal-Fair Deal measures than any of its predecessors after 1938, or its successors either; becoming, on its record, the most liberal Congress in the last fifteen years.

This was the Congress that enacted the comprehensive housing program, providing generously for slum clearance, urban redevelopment and public housing; the Congress that put through the major revision of social security, doubling insurance and assistance benefits and greatly — though not universally — extending coverage. This was the Congress that reformed the Displaced Persons Act, increased the minimum wage, doubled the hospital construction program, authorized the National Science Foundation and the rural telephone program, suspended the "sliding scale" on price supports, extended the soil conservation program, provided new grants for planning state and local public works and plugged the long-standing merger loophole in the Clayton Act. And it was principally this Congress that financed Truman's last expansions of flood control, rural electrification, reclamation, public power and transmission lines.

But this record of domestic accomplishment was obscured for commentators, public and Administration by a series of failures on the most dramatic

gress and a few more besides, most notably CVA. This last was spelled out in a special message, April 13, 1949, one of the two Fair Deal items so distinguished that year. (The other was the health program, once again the subject of a special message on April 22, 1949.)

²⁵ This is not unusual. It happened again in 1953.

and most dramatized of 1948's great expectations. In the first session of the 81st Congress — the last full session before Korea — aid to education, health insurance, FEPC and Taft-Hartley repeal were taken up, debated, fought over and either stalled or killed outright somewhere along the line.

General aid to education — that is, maintenance and operation funds for state school systems — had won Senate approval in 1948, in a form that represented careful compromise among religious interests and between the richer and the poorer states. Reintroduced in 1949, the same measure speedily received Senate approval once again.²⁶ But as the year wore on, these compromises started to unravel; various groups and individuals took second looks, had second thoughts. The whole basis of agreement fell apart before the Senate bill had cleared the House Committee. There the bill remained, unreported at the session's end, eight months after Senate passage. There the second session found it — and left it.

The story on health is similar in some respects. The interest groups supporting Truman's health program and its Congressional sponsors did not seriously hope for early victory on compulsory health insurance. But they — and the Administration — saw this issue as a stick with which to beat the Congress into passing other major aspects of the program — increased hospital construction and research, aid to medical education and grants to local public health units; all obvious and necessary preliminaries to effective operation of any general insurance scheme. In the Senate, all four of these secondary measures were approved by early fall of 1949. Hospital construction and research grants — both expansions of existing programs — also fared well in the House. But the medical education and local health bills never got to the House floor.²⁷ They were smothered to death in committee by a resurgent opposition — medical and other — which seized the stick of health insurance and used it to inflict increasing punishment, not only on these bills, their sponsors and supporters, but on the whole Administration and the Democratic Party.

In the case of civil rights, Truman's program was not merely stalled but buried during 1949. At the session's start, the interest groups — supported by the leadership in Congress and Administration — would stand for nothing but a test on the most controversial measure of them all: compulsory FEPC. The measure's proponents were perfectly aware they could not gain compulsion from the House, nor cloture from the Senate, without a major showing of Republican support. This was not forthcoming; the test proved that at any rate. It also helped Democrats, Southern as well as Northern,

²⁶ This was S. 472 of the 80th Congress; S. 246 of the 81st.

²⁷ The education bill S. 1453—H.R. 9508 was never reported; the local health bill, S. 522—H.R. 5865 never cleared Rules.

discharge some pressing obligations toward constituents. But the long filibuster of 1949 was all the Senate could endure. None of its leaders was prepared to face another bloodletting in 1950.²⁸

The Congressional failure on Telf-Hartley repeal was just as conclusive as that on civil rights and much more surprising to Administration, press and public. In 1949, the struggle in both Houses was intense, but save for the injunction in emergency disputes — the one feature opponents of repeal could press home to the general public — the advocates of a new law probably would have had their way. The interest groups could not, or would not give on this; the Administration could not, or would not impel them — so everything was lost; lost in 1949 and left, then, to await a new test in a new Congress.²⁹ A decisive beating in the first session might be compromised in the second, but hardly reversed. And trade union leadership was in no mood for compromise.

Nor was the President. His response to each of these defeats in 1949 — and other, lesser scars sustained that year — was a renewed recommendation in 1950. His January messages to the second session of the 81st Congress included virtually all proposals still outstanding, that he had listed to the first session in his moment of honeymoon a year before.³⁰

Clearly, there was little hope, in 1950, for much of what he asked. Yet the 81st Congress, as Truman was to say that spring, had “already reversed” its predecessor’s backward “trend.”³¹ And if the “trend” now ran the Fair Deal’s way, perhaps what this Congress withheld, would be forthcoming from the next — the 82nd Congress to be elected in November.

Not since 1934, had the Democratic Party increased its majorities in a mid-term election; breaking into new terrain in North and West. Yet that,

²⁸ In the Senate, cloture motions on the FEPC bill (S. 1728) failed May 19 and again June 12, 1949. A “toothless” — non-compulsory — measure (H.R. 4453) did pass the House in the next session, February 23, 1950, but the Senate made no move to take it up.

²⁹ H.R. 2032 was recommitted after House debate, March 24, 1949; S. 249 was debated in the Senate and passed June 30, 1949, in a form wholly unacceptable to the bill’s sponsors. Thereafter both bills were allowed to die in the House Committee.

Note that the term “repeal” was more symbolic than exact. None of the repeal advocates, at this time or later, were demanding return to the Wagner Act *per se*. Some changes were envisaged as early as Truman’s annual messages of 1946 and 1947. These were elaborated in the Administration “repeal” bills that met defeat in 1949.

³⁰ There was one notable exception. In 1949, Truman had felt constrained, despite the growing signs of recession, to urge his anti-inflation program on the Congress with some new elements, especially the proposals for expansion of plant capacity to overcome scarcities. In 1950, after recession had been a reality for many months and was only beginning to wane, there was nothing said about anti-inflation measures, save the vestigial — and usual — remnants: rent control renewal and regulation of consumer and bank credit.

In 1950, the State of the Union Message was delivered January 4; the Economic Report, January 6.

³¹ Address to the National Democratic Conference, Chicago, Illinois, May 15, 1950.

and nothing less, was surely Truman's goal for 1950. "I hope," remarked the President, "that by next January, some of the obstructionists will be removed."³² And not content with pressing, once again, all the remaining issues of 1948, he urged on Congress three further measures each of which, if it appealed at all, would tap new sources of support, beyond the groups and areas where Democratic power was presumably entrenched.

One of these measures involved a new departure for the President on farm legislation. His 1950 State of the Union Message was the occasion for Truman's first formal use of the magic words connoting "Brannan Plan."³³ There he first attached the adjective "mandatory" to price supports, first urged "a system of production payments," first declared, "as a matter of national policy," that "safeguards must be maintained against slumps in farm prices," in order to support "farm income at fair levels."

To the uninitiate these words may look very little different from their counterparts in prior Presidential messages. But in the language of farm bureaucrats and organizations, these were magic words indeed, fighting words, emphasizing finally and officially, a sharp turn in Truman's agriculture policy — a turn which had begun in 1948, progressively distinguishing Democratic from Republican farm programs, and bringing the Administration now to ground where the Republicans in Congress — not to speak of many Democrats — could not or would not follow.³⁴

By the time Truman spoke in January 1950, the more far-reaching measures his words implied had already been rebuffed at the preceding session of the Congress — and the "Brannan Plan" had already become a scare word, rivalling "socialized medicine" in the campaign arsenal the Republicans were readying. Yet by his endorsement Truman seemed to say that scare word or no, here was an issue to cement for Democrats the farm support which he had gained so providentially in 1948.

The second new measure to be proposed in the State of the Union mes-

³² *Ibid.*

³³ In May 1949, the Secretary of Agriculture, Charles Brannan, set before the Congressional Agriculture Committees, a complicated series of proposals, and suggestions — which, to his chagrin, an alert opposition promptly labelled "The (Socialistic) Brannan Plan." The complex and controversial specifics Brannan then advanced were intended to make price supports more nearly serve the purpose of maintaining high-level farm income under conditions of increasing total production and consumption, with subsidies ("production payments") to bridge the gap between an adequate return to the producer and an inviting price to the consumer on perishable commodities.

³⁴ The Agriculture Act of 1948, the so-called Hope-Aiken Bill, passed by the Republican 80th Congress, had emphasized "flexibility," its mechanism the "sliding scale," its underlying philosophy not maintenance of high income, but prevention of excessive loss. Brannan's proposals represented a sharply different philosophy about the purposes of Federal action, let alone specifics. But the first session of the 81st Congress went with him only a small part of the way. His more striking innovations were side-tracked during 1949.

sage for 1950, concerned the housing shortage "for middle-income groups, especially in large metropolitan areas." The Housing Act of 1949 had granted more aids for private home financing which swelled the flood of relatively high priced houses. The Act also had promised more public housing, with subsidized rentals for people in the lowest income brackets. Between these two types of housing was a gap, affecting mainly urban and suburban "middle" groups of white collar and blue collar families; swing groups politically, as time would show. For them, in 1950, the President proposed "new legislation authorizing a vigorous program to help cooperatives and other non-profit groups build housing which these families could afford."³⁵

The third of 1950's new proposals was billed as a mere promissory note in the State of the Union message. "I hope," said Truman, "to transmit to the Congress a series of proposals to . . . assist small business and to encourage the growth of new enterprises." As such, this was no more concrete than the benign expressions in many earlier messages and party platforms. But in the spring of 1950, the President kept his promise and put meat on these old bones with a comprehensive small business program far more elaborate than anything advanced since the emergency legislation of the early thirties.³⁶ The immediate reaction, in Congress and out, was very favorable. A leading spokesman for "big" business called the Truman message "tempered, reasoned, non-political."³⁷ Small business groups expressed great interest; even some bankers had kind words to say.

The President's small business program went to Congress as he entrained for the Far West, on his "non-political" tour of May, 1950. The Fair Deal's prospects were then enticing numbers of Administration stalwarts to leave their safe House seats and campaign for the Senate. Many signs encouraged them. The country was prosperous, recession ending; the Presidential program popular, to all appearances, attracting interest in useful quarters and stirring overt opposition only where most expected and least feared. Foreign policy was costly but not noticeably burdensome, defense pared down, the budget coming into balance.

Yet on the other side were signs of change, foretastes of things to come,

³⁵ This proposal was first incorporated in, then eliminated from the Housing Act Amendments of 1950, which Congress passed in April of that year. Reintroduced as a separate measure (H.R. 8393), it died quietly in committee after the Korean outbreak.

³⁶ The program was contained in a special message dated May 5, 1950. Five points were included: (1) insurance of small bank loans, (2) provisions to encourage equity investment, (3) broadened lending powers for RFC, (4) strengthened managerial and technological aids, and (5) consolidation of all assistance programs under the Secretary of Commerce.

³⁷ Address by Benjamin Fairless, United States Steel Corporation, at the Boston Jubilee of 1950, May 18, 1950.

making 1950 a very special year, a year of sharp transition, in retrospect a great divide. The preceding winter saw the last of Chinese Nationalist resistance on the Asian mainland. In January Alger Hiss was convicted in his second trial — and Secretary Acheson quoted from the Scriptures. In February, Senator McCarthy first shared with the public his discovery of Communism's menace here at home. In May, Senator Kefauver's committee began televised crime hearings, exposing criminal connections of political machines in some of the nation's largest cities — where, as it happened, the Democratic Party had been long in control.

And on the twenty-fifth of June, the North Korean Communists invaded the Republic of Korea.

KOREA: THE GREAT DIVIDE

In legislative terms, the initial impact of Korea on the Fair Deal is symbolized by the collapse of Truman's small business program. Senate hearings had just got under way when the fighting began. They terminated quickly in the first days of July. The Senate committee which had started down this track enthusiastically, turned off to tackle the Defense Production Act — controls for the new, part-way war economy.

All along the line, Fair Deal proposals were permanently shelved or set aside, as Congress worked on measures for defense. And on one of these measures, price controls, which had long been identified with the Fair Deal, not the President but Congress forced the issue — never again was Truman able to resurrect it as his own.

This calls for a short digression. In July, 1950, the President did not raise the price control issue, because he feared it might delay Congressional response on other needed measures of control; fearing, moreover, lest opinion overseas might take his call for direct controls as indicating all-out preparation for the general war Korean intervention was intended to avert, not foster.

But Congress proceeded, on its initiative, to include discretioning price and wage controls among the economic powers in the Defense Production Act. The measure became law September 8, 1950. For a variety of reasons, no general application of direct controls was attempted until nearly five months later. Meanwhile the Chinese attack of November 27, set off new buying waves, with consequent sharp price increases. And by the time a general freeze was instituted, January 26, 1951, this sequence of events had thoroughly shaken confidence in the Administration's leadership on the inflation issue.

The fact that Truman subsequently fought for strengthened control legis-

lation, while his congressional opponents shot holes in it at every opportunity, seems not to have restored the President's position in the public mind, nor recreated for the Democrats that popular response the issue had accorded them in 1948. The Republicans, if anyone, drew strength from popular discomfort with high prices, in subsequent elections.

Apart from price controls, the conflict in Korea drew Congressional — and national — attention away from the traditional Fair Deal issues. As election time approached, in 1950, there was no back drop of recent, relevant Congressional debate to liven up these issues, stressing their affirmative appeal. Instead, the opposition had a field day with the negative refrain of "socialism" — or worse — invoking spectres of the "Brannan Plan," "socialized medicine," and Alger Hiss, to unnerve a public preoccupied with sacrifices in a far-off peninsula, nervous over rumors about "Chinese volunteers."

In the first week of November, the electorate — far from increasing Democratic power — reduced to a bare minimum the Democratic Party's lead in both Houses of Congress, abruptly closing the careers of some very senior Senators and some very staunch Administration Congressmen. And in the last week of November the full-scale Chinese intervention in Korea turned virtual victory into disastrous retreat, confronting the Administration and the country with a "new" war, a most uncertain future, and endless possibilities of worse to come.

MOBILIZATION AND RELUCTANT RETREAT: 1951-52

On December 15, 1950, the President proclaimed a National Emergency. Three weeks later, in January, 1951, the 82nd Congress assembled to hear, in virtual silence, what Truman had to say.³⁸

His State of the Union Message was somewhat reminiscent, in its tight organization and sharp phrasing, of the fighting address of 1948. But in tone and content it was, by far, the most conciliatory annual message since 1947.

The entire address was devoted to events abroad and mobilization at home. Its ten-point legislative program was couched in emergency terms. Among the ten points only one Fair Deal item remained in its entirety — aid for medical education, now billed as a means of "increasing the supply of doctors . . . critically needed for defense. . . ." Two other pillars of the Fair Deal program were included in qualified form. General aid to education was requested, "to meet . . . most urgent needs . . .," with the proviso that "some of our plans will have to be deferred. . . ." And while there was no specific mention of Taft-Hartley, or its repeal, the President did ask "improve-

³⁸ The State of the Union Message was delivered January 8, 1951: the Economic Report transmitted January 12..

ment of our labor laws to help provide stable . . . relations and . . . steady production in this emergency."

Aside from a bland and wholly unspecific reference to "improvements in our agriculture laws," an opening for subsequent proposals never made, these were the only references to Fair Deal measures in the Presidential list of "subjects on which legislation will be needed. . . ." They were almost the only references in the entire message; but not quite. After his ten-point enumeration, Truman remarked "the government must give priority to activities that are urgent," and offered "power development" as an example. Then he added, "Many of the things we would normally do . . . must be curtailed or postponed . . ."; the door was finally closing, but — the Congress should give continuing attention ". . . to measures . . . for the long pull." There followed four brief and unelaborated but unmistakable references to increased unemployment and old age insurance, disability and health insurance and civil rights.

As in 1947, so in 1951, the President was shifting emphasis, relegating most welfare measures to some secondary order of priority, without quite ceasing to be their advocate. It was too subtle a performance for the press; the distinctions much too fine for headlines or wide public notice — though not, perhaps, for Congressmen to grasp. Yet in its way, this message represented Truman's recognition of the fundamental change in his circumstances and the Nation's; his nearest approach to Roosevelt's sharp, dramatic switch, a decade earlier, from "Dr. New Deal" to "Dr. Win-the-War."

And unlike 1947, this mild beginning, in January 1951, heralded a more conciliatory tone, an increased interest in negotiation, on some of the Fair Deal's most striking programs. As the year wore on, Truman gradually changed tactics on at least three fronts, seeking different ground from that staked out in pre-Korean years.

The first of these shifts came in the field of health. There the Administration was hopelessly on the defensive by 1951. The vocal presence of an aroused and potent medical opposition, victorious in trials of strength at 1950's elections, sufficed to make most Congressmen suspect and fear a taint of "socialized medicine" in any Truman health measure, however limited its purpose or narrow its scope. The President had barely raised the health insurance issue in January, 1951, but its mere invocation was now enough to halt all legislation in the field.³⁹ So far had the opposition come, from its days on the defensive, back in 1949.

³⁹ Truman's two specific proposals, aid to medical education and aid to local public health units (mentioned in the 1951 Economic Report), fared even worse in the 82nd Congress than in the 81st. In 1951, the education bill (S. 337) did not even pass the

Finally, Truman voiced his recognition of the situation: "I am not clinging to any particular plan," he told an audience in June.⁴⁰ This was followed, six months later, by appointment of the President's Commission on the Health Needs of the Nation, charged with surveying, from the ground up, all problems and proposals in the field.⁴¹ In January 1952, addressing the second session of the 82nd Congress, the President remarked of health insurance, "So far as I know it is still the best way. If there are . . . better answers I hope this Commission will find them."⁴²

A second change in tactics during 1951 came on the issue of Taft-Hartley. Senator Taft's triumphant re-election, the preceding autumn, had symbolized how futile were the hopes of 1949 for a renewal, in a "better" Congress, of that year's stalled attack. In Truman's January messages of 1951 there was no mention of "repeal." The following October, his first address at a trade-union affair, that year, was notable for subdued treatment of the issue. "We want a law . . . that will be fair . . .," he said, "and . . . we will have that kind of law, in the long run . . ." and that was all.⁴³ Two months later, the President enlarged upon this theme, telling the Congress, "we need . . . to improve our labor law . . . even the sponsors . . . admit it needs to be changed. . . ."⁴⁴ The issue of "repeal" was dormant, so Truman seemed to say. Amendment, even perhaps piecemeal amendment — anathema in 1949 — now measured the ambitions of his Administration.

The President's third shift in emphasis came on his agriculture program. Since the Korean outbreak, farm prices had soared, along with the demand for food and fibre. There was little in the current situation to promote wide interest in Brannan's innovations, or counteract the socialistic spectres that his "plan" invoked. In January 1951, the President had no specific comment on the ideas he had endorsed a year before. By January 1952, Truman was prepared with some specifics, but on much narrower ground. That year, his State of the Union message asked — and Congress shortly granted — renewed suspension of the "sliding scale" on price supports, which otherwise would have become effective at the end of 1952.⁴⁵ For the rest, he simply

Senate and the health units bill (S. 445), while approved in the Senate, was smothered in the House with even more dispatch than in 1949–50.

⁴⁰ Address at the National Institute of Health Clinical Center, Bethesda, Md. June 22, 1951.

⁴¹ The Commission, chaired by Dr. Paul Magnuson, was established December 29, 1951 and given a free hand. It reported, a year later, December 18, 1952, recommending, among many other things, various forms of public subsidy for private health insurance plans to meet the high cost of medical care — the problem to which Truman's governmental health insurance proposal had been addressed.

⁴² State of the Union Message, January 9, 1952.

⁴³ Address at the dedication of Compers Square, October 27, 1951.

⁴⁴ State of the Union Message, January 9, 1952.

⁴⁵ State of the Union Message, January 9, 1952; see also the Economic Report of January 12, 1952.

remarked that there was "need to find . . . a less costly method for supporting perishable commodities than the law now provides" — a plug for "production payments," surely, but in a fashion that softpedalled the far-reaching overtones of 1950.

The year of 1951 turned out to be a hard and unrewarding time for the Administration; a year marked by MacArthur's firing, by strenuous debates on foreign policy and on controls, by blighted hopes for quick truce in Korea, by snowballing complaints of government corruption — and by prolonged Congressional indifference to the welfare measures on the trimmed-down Truman list.

The State of the Union message in January, 1952, was less incisive than its predecessor — so was the emergency — but hardly less moderate in its approach on home affairs. Besides the new departures on health insurance, labor laws and farm legislation, the President appealed again for aid to education and the supplementary health bills of a year before. Again he mentioned power needs. Again he raised, briefly and generally, the issues of civil rights. Otherwise, in only two respects did he go beyond specifics urged in 1951 — asking cost-of-living increases for social security recipients and readjustment benefits for Korean veterans.

These two requests were granted rather promptly, giving Truman his last minor successes. But in the spring of 1952, the second session of the 82nd Congress was interested less in legislating than investigating; less concerned with pending measures than with Administration struggles over corruption — and the steel dispute; preoccupied above all else with the coming Presidential nominations and the campaign to follow in the fall. The session's main contribution to the Fair Deal program was not positive, but negative, rousing one last Truman proposal in opposition to the McCarran Act; creating one more Fair Deal issue; liberalization of the immigration laws.⁴⁶

In this fashion, Truman's last Congress slowed to a close. And in Chicago, that July, appeared a final summary of Fair Deal business left undone — the Democratic Platform of 1952.

What Truman had played down, in his last annual messages, the platform now set forth in some detail. It called for action on the civil rights program, avoiding retrogression by a hair; pledged still more improvement in the social insurance laws; promised more resource conservation and development,

⁴⁶ Truman vetoed the McCarran Act, June 25, 1952, urging instead his emergency immigration program of March 24, 1952, together with a general long-range study. Congress promptly overrode the veto. Thereupon, on September 4, 1952 Truman established a President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization which reported January 1, 1953. Its report generally confirmed the President's objections and recommended many changes in the law. These were, of course, no longer actionable, as far as Truman was concerned, but formed the base for a continuing agitation by some Democrats. See, for example, the Lehman bill, S. 2585, 83rd Congress.

including public power; urged Federal help for schools, this time stressing construction along with "general" aid; called for a firm stand on public housing and revived the "middle income" issue of two years before; spoke feelingly of protection and assistance for small business, hinting at specifics unmentioned since Korea; adopted Truman's formula on health, with kind words for the President's Commission; followed him also on farm price supports, on immigration and on a host of lesser issues, long the stock-in-trade of Democratic documents.

At one point only did the platform diverge sharply from the President's more recent formulations. On Taft-Hartley it abandoned his new stand, reverting to the cliché of "repeal." The Democratic candidate was put to some trouble by this change, but it cannot be said to have much mattered to the voters.

It had been seven years since Harry Truman, reaffirming Roosevelt's purpose, first charted the Fair Deal in his twenty-one point program of 1945. Now it received its last expression in his party's platform for 1952. This remains the final statement. In January 1953, Truman and his party yielded office to the first Republican Administration in twenty years.

A FAIR DEAL BALANCE SHEET

Set the platform of 1952 alongside the program of 1945, allow for changing circumstances and particulars, then run a quick calculation on the Fair Deal legislative program. What did Truman gain in seven years from his four Congresses? What came of all the trials and tribulations recorded in this essay?

In the first place, it is clear that Truman managed to obtain from Congress means for modernizing, bringing up to date, a number of outstanding New Deal landmarks in social welfare and economic development among them: social security, minimum wages, public health and housing; farm price supports, rural electrification, soil conservation, reclamation, flood control and public power. Not all of these were strictly New Deal innovations, but all gained either life or impetus from Roosevelt in the thirties. And in the new circumstances of the post-war forties they were renewed, elaborated, enlarged upon, by legislative action urged in Truman's Fair Deal program; even their underlying rationale nailed down in law by the Employment Act of 1946.

This is significant, and not alone by virtue of particulars attained. A generation earlier, the very spirit of Wilsonian New Freedom had been buried deep in the debris of reaction following world war. Not so with the New Deal.

As a consolidator, as a builder on foundations, Truman left an impressive legislative record; the greater part achieved, of course, in less than two year's time, and by a single Congress. Moreover as protector, as defender, wielder of the veto against encroachments on the liberal preserve, Truman left a record of considerable success — an aspect of the Fair Deal not to be discounted. He could not always hold his ground, sustained some major losses, but in the process managed to inflict much punishment on his opponents.

The greater Truman vetoes pretty well define what might be called the legislative program of the conservative coalition in his time.⁴⁷ On many of these measures he made his veto stick, as with the offshore oil bills in 1946 and 1952, or natural gas and basing points in 1950.⁴⁸ On certain others — like the Gearhardt Resolution in 1948 — what one Congress enacted over his veto, the next retracted at his demand.⁴⁹ And on a few — especially the two already noted — Congress overrode him, and the ground once lost was not made up in Truman's time: the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the McCarran Act in 1952.⁵⁰

Besides these, Truman asked of Congress four main things which were denied him: aid to education, health insurance, civil rights and — for want of better shorthand — “Brannan Plan.” On the outstanding features of these four, he got no satisfaction: no general grants for all school systems; no national prepayment plan for medical care; no FEPC, or anti-poll tax or anti-lynching laws; no wholesale renovation of price supports to insure good returns from general farm production. Here, if anywhere, does Elmer Davis' refrain approach reality: “Truman kept asking for all of it and getting none of it.”⁵¹

Why did he keep asking? From 1945 to 1950, one may concede that year by year there always seemed to be good reason to press on: reason to hope and plan for action, if not in one session then the next, reason to believe the very chance for future action might depend on present advocacy. But after 1950, after Korea, faced with a dozen hard new issues, on the defen-

⁴⁷ At least in the domestic field; in foreign affairs such Congressional initiative was expressed, especially, in the China aid of 1948 and the various forms of aid to Spain, from 1950 on. These the Administration accepted.

⁴⁸ The dates of these vetoes are as follows: offshore oilbills, August 1, 1946 and May 29, 1952; natural gas bill, April 15, 1950; basing point bill, June 16, 1950.

⁴⁹ The “Gearhardt Resolution” (removing certain news vendors and others from social security coverage) was pocket-vetoed August 6, 1947; regularly vetoed April 5, 1948, the latter promptly overridden. Coverage was restored in the social security amendments of 1950.

⁵⁰ An earlier McCarran Act, the Internal Security Act of 1950, vetoed August 22, 1950, is also in this category.

⁵¹ Strengthened unemployment compensation — involving increased coverage, duration and benefits under state systems — also belongs in this category, though in the absence of sustained mass unemployment its impact as an issue was muffled during most of Truman's term.

sive all the way from "Communism to corruption," what then explains the Truman course? He must have known, his actions show awareness, that there had come a real sea change in his affairs and in the country's. Why move so slowly towards a bare minimum of reappraisal, readjustment?

Perhaps the answers lie, in part, in Truman's temperament; partly in his concept of the Presidency. Unquestionably he thought these measures right for the country; hence proper for the President to advocate, regardless of their chances in the Congress. He had assumed responsibility as keeper of the country's conscience on these issues; as its awakener, as well, by virtue of stands taken far ahead of the procession. For civil rights, especially, Truman could claim — like Roosevelt after the court fight of 1937 — that while he may have lost a legislative battle, the forcing of the issue helped to win a larger war. "There has been a great awakening of the American conscience on the issue of civil rights," he was to say in his farewell report to Congress, "all across the nation . . . the barriers are coming down."⁵² This was happening; by his demands for legislation he conceived that he helped make it happen. On that promise, he was bound not to abandon his position, no matter what the legislative outcome, present or prospective.

Even in strictly legislative terms there was, perhaps, much to be gained by standing firm. Were not some of the fights that failed a vital stimulus to others that succeeded? Were not some votes against a measure such as health insurance, repaid by other votes in favor of reciprocal trade renewal, say? Was not a total Presidential program basically advantaged if it overshoot the limits of assured Congressional response? There are no ready measurements providing certain answers to these questions. But Presidents must seek them all the same. And on his record there is little doubt what answers Truman found.

For Truman then, each of his great outstanding issues had value as a legislative stalking horse, if nothing more. But that is not to say he saw no more in them. On the contrary, had he not thought many things attainable, still actionable in the not too distant future — still meaningful, therefore, in rallying political support — he scarcely would have bothered, during 1951, to cleanse his farm and health programs — much less Taft-Hartley — of the worst taints absorbed in the campaign of 1950, thus rendering them useable for 1952.

Those changes in approach were hardly aimed at Congress — not, anyway, the current Congress. Rather, the President was preparing new positions for his party, shifting to ground on which it could afford to stand with him and to uphold, if in adjusted guise, the Fair Deal label and the Truman cause.

⁵² State of the Union Message, January 7, 1953.

Right to the last, then, Truman was persuaded that those Fair Deal issues touched felt needs, roused real response among Americans; no longer viable objectives for his time in office, but crucial undertakings in his party's future.

THE MEANING OF THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

Although Dwight D. Eisenhower's Presidency was a part of the very recent past, the literature concerning his administration already outweighs that of most of his Republican predecessors and will unquestionably continue to expand. The memoirs of such of his advisers as Sherman Adams, Ezra Taft Benson, Allen Dulles, John Emmett Hughes, Richard Nixon, Lewis Strauss, and the first volume of Eisenhower's own personal account, *Mandate for Change* (New York, 1963), have already been published. These must be used with the caution necessary for all sources of this kind, but they do provide an enduringly valuable account of certain aspects of the first Republican Administration since that of Herbert Hoover. The numerous contemporary secondary studies of the Eisenhower years, of course, will prove to be more ephemeral than these first-hand reports. Until more materials are available and more definite histories are written, however, such volumes as Robert Donovan's *Eisenhower: The Inside Story* (New York, 1956), and Marquis Childs' *Eisenhower: Captive Hero* (New York, 1958), provide a store of information and a number of insights.

The following article by political journalist William V. Shannon fits into this second category. Written during the last years of Eisenhower's second term, it is important not only for the thesis it expounds but also as a record of the impressions of an astute contemporary observer. Shannon's article raises several intriguing questions about the nature and possibilities of political leadership in the United States, the make-up and functions of the two major political parties, and the meaning of the political deadlock of the postwar years. For instance, Shannon strongly implies that Eisenhower quite consciously assumed the role of a caretaker President and could have accomplished more had he wanted to. A certain amount of evidence tends to support such an argument. To cite one example, Sherman Adams in his memoirs, *First Hand Report* (New York, 1961), reveals that Eisenhower refused to lift a finger to effect the choice of a successor to Senate Majority Leader Robert Taft after the latter's death and that he almost consistently refrained from exerting pressure upon Senator William Knowland when he was elevated to Taft's former position. Yet the fact remains that on certain issues — especially foreign policy — Eisenhower did attempt to lead and with the support of Congressional Democrats he was successful in getting his foreign policy program adopted. It was

in the area of domestic policy that Eisenhower frequently met a stone wall of Congressional opposition. Though Shannon argues in effect that the goal of the Eisenhower administration was little more than the preservation of the gains of its Democratic predecessors, Eisenhower's intentions on the domestic front are not yet, and may never be, precisely clear. The President's inability to alter substantially the New Deal-Fair Deal patchwork of reform should not be too easily interpreted to mean that he did not desire to do so. His futile attempt to alter the federal commitment to the Tennessee Valley Authority, which led to the Dixon-Yates controversy, his cutbacks in medical spending, his conservative appointments to federal regulatory agencies, his at times overt hostility toward organized labor, all may indicate that the only thing that stood between the President and a policy of greater domestic retrenchment was the Congress.

In part Eisenhower's failure to exert greater domestic leadership was due to the Republican party's inability to really control Congress as well as the growing division within Republican ranks that led to the schism of 1964. But the problem antedated Eisenhower's Presidency. The Truman Administration was similarly plagued by domestic deadlock, as Richard E. Neustadt reveals in his article reprinted above, and the condition can be traced at least as far back as the closing years of Franklin Roosevelt's second term. Nor can we too easily assume, as Shannon seems to, that this stalemate represented a national consensus. (Eric Goldman presents a lengthy argument for the consensus thesis in his study, *The Crucial Decade - And After, 1945-1960* [New York, 1961]). Rather, it may indicate a serious malady within the American political process itself, as J. M. Burns maintains in his *Deadlock of Democracy*. In addition, many of our judgments concerning the Eisenhower administration will have to remain tentative until we have a better understanding of the effects of America's growing involvement in world politics upon domestic policy.

But if Shannon's article raises more questions than it answers, it is no less valuable, especially at this early stage of our understanding. Other pertinent articles include: N. A. Graebner, "Eisenhower's Popular Leadership," *Current History*, XXXIX (Oct. 1960); S. Hyman, "The Failure of the Eisenhower Presidency," *The Progressive*, XXIV (May 1960); J. Tobin, "The Eisenhower Economy and National Security," *Yale Review*, XLVII (March 1958); E. R. May, "Eisenhower and After," in *The Ultimate Decision: The President as Commander in Chief*, E. R. May, ed., (New York, 1960); and C. J. V. Murphy's series of articles on the Eisenhower Administration in the January, 1956, February, 1956, March, 1956, July, 1957, and January, 1958 issues of *Fortune*.

Eisenhower as President: A Critical Appraisal of the Record

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

Across a divided and militarily defenseless Europe, the shadow of Stalin's armies fell; in Korea, Communist Chinese forces pushed American armies back toward the sea; in the United States, Joseph McCarthy scored his first major political triumph, and the Fulbright Committee investigation began to uncover a vein of corruption in the national administration. It was a grim time for Americans. It was November 1950.

When President Truman summoned General Dwight D. Eisenhower to his private study in the White House one afternoon that month to ask him to return to active duty and become chief of the NATO forces in Western Europe, he called upon one of the few Americans who commanded universal respect and admiration. The image of Eisenhower, the liberator of Nazi-occupied Europe, stood bright and untarnished. He was a symbol of the nation's triumphant and united national purpose in a time when the national consensus was fracturing and the national mood becoming querulous and ugly. Eisenhower's acceptance of his new military assignment ended his brief civilian career as president of Columbia University. It restored him to the center of the public scene where in the decade to follow he was to be the dominant figure. His dominance of the age did not derive from any personal mastery of its diverse forces. A central personality may epitomize the spirit of an era and symbolize its prevailing balance of political forces without necessarily transforming the one or controlling the other. As the decade of the 20's is inextricably linked with Calvin Coolidge and the 30's with Franklin Roosevelt, the 1950's in our political history is likely to be known as the age of Eisenhower.

Although Eisenhower has two years still to serve, his place in history and the significance of his presidency are already becoming clear. Eisenhower is a transitional figure. He has not shaped the future nor tried to repeal the past. He has not politically organized nor intellectually defined a new consensus. When he leaves office in January 1961, the foreign policies and the domestic policies of the past generation will be about where he found them in 1953. No national problem, whether it be education, housing, urban

revitalization, agriculture, or inflation, will have been advanced importantly toward solution nor its dimensions significantly altered. The Eisenhower era is the time of the great postponement. Dwight Eisenhower, the executor and trustee of the programs of his two Democratic predecessors whose contemporary he was (Eisenhower is only eight years younger than Franklin Roosevelt and six years younger than Harry Truman), already looms in history not as the first great figure of a new Republican age but the last of an old Democratic generation.

In assessing Eisenhower's status, it is worth recalling the somber, impassioned national mood which the sudden, savage turn in the Korean war created eight years ago this autumn. The emotions aroused by that war endangered the great double consensus on foreign affairs and domestic affairs which had been in the making since 1933. Eisenhower's historic function when he entered political life two years later was to end the war and preserve that consensus against the attacks of its enemies.

The domestic consensus had emerged out of the violent political struggles and intellectual gyrations of the New Deal period from 1933 to 1938. It rested on an irreversible common agreement that the Federal government has a responsibility to maintain the rudiments of a welfare state. Social security, unemployment compensation, and minimum wages were the basic features of this program, and its chief guarantors were the trade unions to whom the Wagner Act of 1935 had given firm legal status. The unionists and their unorganized but sympathetic fellow workers were the guarantors of the consensus because they were the most numerous and, compared to the farmers, the old-age pensioners, and other groups, the most politically dependable of all the New Deal beneficiaries. The Full Employment Act of 1946, the first year of the Truman administration, set a seal of official approval on this consensus but did not extend its range.

The other half of the national consensus, the half on foreign policy, had also begun under Roosevelt but had reached its more significant development during the Truman years. Roosevelt, by his aggressive championing of an internationalist position during the bitter isolationist-interventionist debate of 1940-41, established the basis for a national policy. His actions and his education of the public were essential first steps. He carried it further in his negotiations during the war with various Republican party personalities, looking toward our entry into a world organization. Truman completed this undertaking by leading the country into the United Nations. A genuine bipartisan collaboration during the next five years carried through the Marshall Plan, the Greek-Turkish program, the Berlin airlift, the Point Four program, and other achievements abroad. By 1950, the consensus on foreign policy was well established. It rested on the concept of containment. If Russian ag-

gression in all its forms was firmly resisted, if the military and economic strength of the West were maintained and increased, and if the neutral, underdeveloped countries were not lost to Communism, it would be possible to avoid a third war and to leave the resolution of the cold war to the slow working of history.

Communist China's entry into the Korean war put the foreign policy consensus in jeopardy. The shocking defeats, the capture of thousands of our troops by the Communists, and the eventual bloody stalemate aroused many doubts and profound dissatisfaction. The scope of the war and its inherent nature intensified popular resentment and bafflement. It was clearly not a major war evoking the instinctive zeal and emotional commitment of the whole population; yet its duration and the thousands of dead and wounded made it more burdensome than the brief "brushfire wars" that the containment policy had seemed to postulate. If it was only "a police action," as President Truman called it, how could the government ask for wartime sacrifices? If it was a glorious struggle on behalf of the United Nations, why did the other UN members leave almost all of the fighting to us?

The anxieties were deep and shaking. The public, half-unconsciously and inarticulately, began the search for an alternative to the existing consensus. First, there was a brief, wild resurgence of the old isolationist impulse in early December 1950 when the drive to the Yalu turned into disastrous defeat. The momentary impulse to get our forces out of Korea and abandon the Asian mainland to the Chinese Communists receded once General Ridgway rallied our forces and stabilized the military situation. Second, there was the alternative of smashing our way out of the dilemmas of a containment policy by adopting a more venturesome course. This alternative drew upon feelings and posed choices ranging from the proposals for bombing across the Yalu in Manchuria to launching a preventive war "to get the whole thing over with." The popularity of this alternative policy of aggressive venturesomeness reached its height in the spring of 1951 when General MacArthur made his triumphant tour through the United States after his dismissal. This alternative began to fade during the prolonged, anticlimactic MacArthur hearings. There was yet a third alternative. Senator Joseph McCarthy and a few other senators propounded the view that the real source of danger was treason within. The tendency of those who propagated this alternative was to deprecate the importance of the Soviet Union's power and enormously inflate the real but limited and secondary dangers of Soviet espionage and political infiltration within this country. The minimizing of the Soviet Union's menace flattered many naively chauvinistic ideas about our own relative place in the sun; the exaggeration of the espionage-infiltration problem catered to a congeries of notions about foreigners,

radicals, and Communists. And McCarthy's unexpectedly rich talents for political invention and propaganda gave this alternative a raging vitality which was only beginning in 1950 and did not lose force for more than four years.

As against the alarms and confusions of the isolationist, MacArthurian, and McCarthyite alternatives, Harry Truman and Dean Acheson, the two chief official exponents of the containment policy, made an ineffective defense. Truman was without the resources of rhetoric and the mastery of a grand style which would have enabled a Roosevelt or a Wilson to make an early and overpowering counterattack. Acheson was impaled by his own verbal indiscretions and his starchy public manner. They could only mechanically repeat the familiar platitudes about collective security, the United Nations, and the importance of having allies.

The times called for a man who could restate national purposes, reassert in more winning terms the basic truths underlying the foreign policy consensus, and thereby make possible once again the full concentration of national energies. The situation seemed to require a political figure who would personify the causes that united us rather than those which divided us. It was a situation, in a word, that was historically right for a conservative. The conservative aspiration in politics is always toward the ideal of unity, toward the assertion of proved values and established rationales, and directed toward the deliberate blurring of economic and political conflicts. Even more, the times were right for a certain kind of conservative whose appeal had proved valid in the American past. This was the military hero who had a conservative social background but was basically apolitical and who, although a military man, had the plain, even drab, style suitable in the chief of state of a profoundly civilian country. No "fancy Dons" like the elegant General George Brinton McClellan in 1864 or the imperial, proconsular General Douglas MacArthur in 1952 need apply. What was wanted was another Washington, another Grant. What was wanted, and what was so splendidly and self-evidently available for the asking, if the asking were insistent enough, was Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The connection between the conservative aspiration (one can scarcely call it, at least in this country, an ideology or a philosophy) and the military hero candidate is more than an expedient alliance. The ideal of national unity dominates the military ethos. Soldiers are trained to defend the existing social order rather than to examine it critically. Military officers see social and economic groups as components in the great design of national strength, not as dynamic participants battling one another in the social arena. If Eisenhower found the conservative Republicans with their dedication to the status quo and their resistance to rapid change more intellectu-

ally congenial than the liberal Democrats with their reformist tradition, he was no different from the great majority of his fellow officers. The military services are not a training school for liberals.

The natural affinity between political conservatives and a military hero has deep roots in the American past. George Washington, our first conservative president and also our first soldier president, set the mold. The conservative Whigs managed to elect only two presidents, General William "Tippecanoe" Harrison in 1840 and General Zachary Taylor in 1848. The Republican politicians seeking to consolidate their hold on the country after the Civil War chose General Grant. Each of these men was relatively innocent of political ideas. Their appeal was based on the exploitation of their personality as a symbol of integrity and unity. Their campaigns were usually keyed to a simple idea. Grant, for example, said in 1868: "Let us have peace." Eisenhower, with the air of a man expressing a crystal clear idea, said repeatedly in 1952: "I believe our test should be — what is good for 155,000,000 Americans."

In the fall of 1949, Senator Arthur Vandenberg wrote in a private letter to a friend that he might support General Eisenhower in the next presidential contest. "I think the specifications call for a personality of great independent magnitude who can give our splintering American people an 'evangel' instead of an ordinary campaign," he wrote.

Three years in advance, Vandenberg had forecast Eisenhower's "Great Crusade." It was as the candidate of the more responsible Republicans interested in protecting the foreign policy consensus that the General entered politics. (In 1948 he had privately favored Vandenberg's own nomination with Harold Stassen as a running mate.) Lacking any alternative to Senator Taft, the Eastern Republicans successfully and plausibly argued with Eisenhower that he would only be carrying out his NATO mission in a different way. By blocking the coming to power of Taft and his neo-isolationist backers, Eisenhower would make certain that a foreign policy oriented toward the defense of Europe and aligned with the principles of the UN would continue to prevail.

Once nominated, Eisenhower necessarily took into account the three principal strains of Republican party criticism of existing foreign policy. Speaking about the Korean war in Peoria, Illinois, he projected the goal of the ultimate withdrawal of American troops from mainland Asia. If there had to be wars there, "let Asians fight Asians." This remark delighted the devout readers of the *Chicago Tribune*. It evoked glowing words of praise from troglodyte politicians like ex-Senator C. Wayland "Curly" Brooks. But it was meaningless. As army chief of staff in 1946-48, Eisenhower had repeatedly and successfully recommended the withdrawal of American

troops from Korea. Moreover, it was settled national military policy to avoid stationing troops on the Asian mainland. But this was quite different from disengaging ourselves completely from our interests and responsibilities on that continent. The Peoria speech was only a fugitive gesture to the isolationists.

Eisenhower made more ambiguous gestures in the direction of the aggressive alternative symbolized by General MacArthur. He allowed himself the liberty of condemning the "negativism" of the containment policy and of referring vaguely to the "liberation" and the "rolling back" of the Communist empire. He promised to go to Korea but he left open the question whether he would end the war by extending it to gain a decisive military victory, or try to end it by continuing the armistice negotiations. The campaign rhetoric unfortunately persisted after election day. In his first State of the Union message, Eisenhower "unleashed" Chiang Kai-shek. Secretary of State Dulles wordily threatened the Communists with "massive retaliation" at times and places of our own choosing. The administration strengthened the government's propaganda forces to wage psychological warfare, seize the strategic initiative, liberate the satellite states by radio broadcasts, and attain various other doubtlessly worthy if uncertain ends. Two crises in the Formosa Straits have demonstrated Chiang Kai-shek is not a free agent; the Hungarian revolution proved the United States had no intention of risking anything to liberate the satellite peoples.

Eisenhower, during the 1952 campaign and for a period thereafter, accommodated himself in small, symbolic ways to the emotional thrust of McCarthyism. He deleted a brief word of praise for General Marshall, his patron, from his Milwaukee speech; he affirmed vigorously his determination to clear the Communists out of government, to encourage the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to cooperate with the investigating committees of Congress, clearly implying the Truman administration had been remiss, if not treasonable, in these matters. He did not avow belief in the McCarthyite conspiracy theory of the origin of the country's troubles but, to the dismay of some of his admirers in both parties and former colleagues in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, neither did he disavow it.

Eisenhower's strategy in waging the "Great Crusade" was the only one possible for him given the plasticity of his temperament, his unintellectual cast of mind, and his confident, optimistic nature. He did not separate the sheep from the goats; he welcomed all dissidents to his cause, committed himself in an irretrievable way only to invulnerable platitudes, and hinted genially that in his new synthesis a reconciliation of all divergent elements

would be possible. This may not have been the internationalist "evangel" that Vandenberg and his other original supporters had in mind, but it is typical of successful party leaders in our country. Franklin Roosevelt, for example, was able in 1932 to hold the loyalty and quicken the hopes of Huey Long and Bernard Baruch, of Harry Byrd and George Norris. Roosevelt organized his coalition with care and calculation while Eisenhower, gifted with some of the instincts if not the insight and expertise of a successful politician, apparently only did what came naturally to him. If his tactics did not rally a newly broadened and better informed support for the foreign policy consensus, they served at least to deaden and to dissipate the pressures for any serious change from that policy. Eisenhower's fabian tactics carried through successfully the defensive holding action which Truman and Acheson after 1950 could no longer sustain.

As against this negative but vitally important accomplishment, Eisenhower's own positive initiatives in foreign affairs dwindle into insignificance. The Baghdad pact in the Middle East and the SEATO pact in the Far East are pale imitations of the NATO pact in Europe. They have proved irrelevant, if not noxious, diplomatic devices. The administration's ambivalent attitude toward Nasser brought the Atlantic Alliance almost to the breaking point in the Suez affair, but our common interests with Britain are so strong they can survive almost any shock; under Prime Minister Macmillan's soothing ministrations, the alliance re-formed itself. Eisenhower has given hospitality in his administration to MacArthurite tendencies in the persons of Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson and Admiral Arthur Radford, but he has heeded their counsel scarcely more than his predecessor did the words of MacArthur himself. Eisenhower has tried the "great man theory" of diplomacy at the summit in Geneva and Dulles has subjected himself to innumerable conferences and journeyings, but no new approaches to the Soviet monolith have developed and none of the old has availed much. Eisenhower settled for truces in Korea and Indo-China, leaving those countries divided and their future unsettled. This is the kind of minimum accommodation between the Communist and non-Communist worlds which the original containment concept had envisaged.

Holding the line and protecting the gains of the past worked well enough in Europe where in the Eisenhower years the situation has remained virtually stable. Secretary Dulles threatened the French with an agonizing reappraisal, but the French were supremely indifferent. So in the end was the Secretary of State. The European Defense Community died, the British and French patched up a reasonable substitute, and the only agonizing was done by the Secretary's Democratic critics. Career diplomats worked out a

compromise solution of the Trieste affair, the Russians relinquished their grip on Austria, and the United States kept the line open to Tito in Belgrade. Germany remained divided. Europe remained divided.

In the Middle East and the Far East, however, creative policy making was called for. The situations were less stable and the inherited guide lines of policy were less well developed. Eisenhower had no contribution to make to the hard problems of Arab and Israeli, of African nationalism, of Communist China's menace to Southeast Asia, of Indonesia's interior decay, and of India's economic viability. He held the line and beyond that he could not go. When he got in trouble on a foreign policy issue in these areas of the world, it was usually because he applied the lessons of the postwar past rigidly and almost mechanically. He reacted to the Anglo-French-Israeli war with Egypt as if it were the Communist invasion of South Korea all over again. When the Chinese Communists shelled Quemoy and Matsu in 1958, he again reacted: hold the line. When Democratic critics attacked him for a lack of discrimination in applying the principle of resisting Communist pressure, Eisenhower responded only with a stubborn reiteration of the principle. At his press conference on October 15, 1958, a reporter asked him if he believed the expression of opposition views on Quemoy "actually weakens the administration's position or ability to negotiate." Eisenhower replied:

No, not always, but I will tell you: there is a very clear distinction to be made with respect to foreign policy as I see it. One is the policy and one is its operation.

Every single day there are new and tough decisions that have to be made within a foreign policy, but if you go back to 1947 [the date of the Truman Doctrine and the beginning of the Marshall Plan] and see the statements that are made about opposing the territorial expansion of Communism by force, when you go back and see what our policy went into in the effort to develop collective security, mutual aid, technical assistance, that kind of thing that . . . at least will help to make the free world stronger collectively and each individual nation as opposed to Communism, that when you come down to it are the basic parts of the policy.

At times, humans, being human, are going to make errors. And therefore I do not, by any means, decry intelligent questioning and criticism of any particular point. But when it comes to the policy that is being established, *I think it has been standing pretty well on its own two feet for a long time* (italics added).

Eisenhower's clear distinction between a policy and the carrying out of that policy may be simpleminded, but future historians are not likely to find a better or more revealing extemporaneous tribute to the foreign policy

consensus. Eisenhower's caretaker attitude is clear. His and Dulles's day-to-day decisions do not matter; only the policy matters, and it has an autonomous life of its own not really greatly dependent on their daily actions and judgments.

When Harry Truman ordered American troops into Korea in June 1950, he did not know that he was killing his Fair Deal domestic program. War and liberalism always go ill together, but when the Korean conflict began few foresaw how it would transform the domestic economic scene and jeopardize the national consensus on domestic policy. When the war broke the country was just pulling itself out of the mild recession of 1949-50. With more than 4,000,000 unemployed and farm prices drifting downward, the overriding problem seemed to be how to avoid a possible depression. The Truman administration was ready to adopt the familiar Keynesian solutions of deficit financing and easier credit. Meanwhile, Truman in the 81st Congress of 1949-50 pushed hard for an extension of the welfare state program. He recommended the Brannan farm plan, Federal health insurance, fair employment practices legislation, increased slum clearance, and Federal aid to education. The country seemed lethargic and a bit hesitant about these proposals. The Democratic congressional majorities elected in 1948 were not quite large enough to pass them. Except for the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Housing Act of 1949 which passed with Republican cooperation, all of these measures failed by a few votes. Yet it would require only small Democratic gains in the November 1950 elections to insure their passage.

The Korean war, however, not only benefited the Republicans at the polls and made the 82nd Congress of 1951-52 considerably more conservative than its predecessor, but also touched off a severe inflation. Unemployment vanished, farm prices soared, and the high cost of living replaced the threat of joblessness as a key domestic issue.

The emergence of the inflation issue played an important part in Eisenhower's first victory and has been significant in influencing the tone of his administration. The fear of inflation greatly helped him to organize a new majority coalition in the country and end the Republican party's chronic minority status. Before 1952, the Republican party drew its strength principally from three groups. One was the more sophisticated Eastern industrial and financial community and its allies in the press, clergy, and universities; this was an elite group, small in numbers but important in terms of wealth, prestige, and influence in the mass communication industries. By a British analogy, these voters, overwhelmingly but not exclusively Republican, make up what might be called the American Establishment. These were the people who had organized the successful Willkie boom in

1940 and had subsequently more or less accepted Governor Dewey and his associate Herbert Brownell as their political agents. A second group was the less sophisticated, much more numerous but relatively less effective, hard-shelled conservative business and commercial people of the smaller cities and towns of the Midwest. Their idol was Robert A. Taft. These voters gave, at most, grudging acceptance to the great consensus; some hoped for a withdrawal into isolation, others resented labor unions. The strongest conviction they shared was that government cost too much, that the budget should always be balanced, and taxes reduced promptly. The third group were the farmers who had voted predominantly Republican since the midterm election of 1938. These three groups were not enough to make a majority. The Democrats were able to maintain themselves in power with the support of the captive South and the second- and third-generation immigrant community voters in the nation's dozen largest metropolitan areas.

Eisenhower cracked the Democratic big cities and the high cost of living was probably his most potent weapon. He made sharp gains among housewives. Moreover, he broke into the ranks of the young voters. During the 1930's and 40's, voters under thirty had been heavily Democratic. By 1952, however, many young war veterans bore a burden of fixed charges, in their mortgaged suburban homes, with appliances bought on the installment plan, driving cars purchased through a finance company. In abstract economic theory, debtors benefit from inflation, but as a practical matter many of these voters felt they were losing in the dollar race. They feared their wages and salaries would not keep pace with rising prices. They voted for Eisenhower.

However, there were other causes bidding for the allegiances of these voters being detached from the old Democratic urban coalition. One of them was McCarthyism. McCarthy had an entree to these voters because, like many of them, he was Catholic and of immigrant ancestry. He was also relatively young and a war veteran. He was a demagogue with a simple issue to exploit who made a biting, raucous, emotional appeal. For these voters, his appeal was quite a new and different experience contrasted to the stodgy, Chamber of Commerce rhetoric they had been accustomed to hear from Republican orators.

The only real threat to the domestic economic consensus established in the New Deal and perpetuated in Truman's Fair Deal would come from a genuine linkage between working-class and lower-middle-class urban voters, attracted by a non-economic issue like McCarthyism, and the regular Republican voters of the more hard-shelled, conservative, Midwestern school. If the Republican ticket in 1952 had been Taft and Knowland instead of Eisenhower and Nixon, this linkage might have had serious consequences.

A right-wing Republican administration much indebted to the emotional dynamism of the McCarthyites for its victory might have attempted a genuine counter-revolution to reverse many of the verdicts of the 30's and 40's embodied in the economic consensus. Eisenhower's nomination forestalled this eventuality. He absorbed the McCarthyite frenzy into his own "Great Crusade" where in subsequent years it died of inanition.

In terms of the internal dynamics of the Republican party, therefore, Eisenhower's victory in November 1952 had several meanings. It meant much of the potential McCarthy following had been detached from his orbit and their fears, dissatisfactions, and status tensions given a different kind of political expression. "I Like Ike" was a harmless substitute for hating the targets McCarthy singled out. The Eisenhower victory meant that millions of lifelong Republican voters were doomed to a new frustration. The "hard-shells" hoping for a permanent cut in foreign aid, a crackdown on labor, or a big reduction in taxes and the budget had contributed to a victory that in terms of these objectives had no meaning. The Eisenhower victory also meant that there were now millions of voters momentarily enlisted in the Republican cause who had never been in the party before; they had been attracted by "Ike" 's personality, by his promise to bring down the cost of living, and by a desire to escape the Korean stalemate. And finally the victory meant that the predominant Republican wing of the American Establishment was, for the first time in a generation, in power in an administration of its own choosing.

The Eisenhower performance was bound to disappoint at least some of these divergent groups. In practice, it has disappointed them all, and for an odd reason. Upon taking office, Eisenhower, the choice of the more sophisticated Republicans, turned out to have many of the convictions of the most Tory adherents of Taft: he did not share their animus against union labor, but otherwise was a true disciple of the Old Guard orthodoxy. He believed in the absolute primacy of thrift, he wanted to return government functions to the states, he believed deficit financing was sin, he believed high taxes and government regulations were "stifling free enterprise." Eisenhower in the White House was closer to an Iowa Rotarian than to a Wall Street banker. He was the man from Abilene, Kansas, not the man from Morningside Heights.

The Eisenhower administration vaguely disappointed many in the Eastern elite who had hoped for more positive leadership. Nelson Rockefeller symbolized this discreet discontent when he left the administration and financed a series of reports on public issues urging ambitious programs far more costly than Eisenhower would countenance. The blue-ribbon members of the committee which presented the Gaither Report on national

defense filed, in effect, a dissent to Eisenhower's concept of the national interest.

Eisenhower and Agricultural Secretary Benson, committed to the view that subsidies were intrinsically wrong and that what farmers desired above all was the liberation from government marketing and production restraints, did not abolish subsidies, restraints, or surpluses, but they did manage to alienate the farmers, a dwindling but still sizable Republican voting bloc.

The newer Republicans, converted in 1952 in the cities and the suburbs, should have been reassured by the administration's preoccupation with the inflation problem and "the stable dollar." To some extent they were, but they had other tangible concerns such as the schools their children attended and the cost of medical care for their aged parents. The Eisenhower administration, penny-pinched and budget-obsessed, sabotaged the annual legislative drives for Federal aid to schools, cut back the slum clearance program almost to a nullity, and on the whole failed to demonstrate that it was vitally concerned with the needs of the urban and lower-income voters. The latter retained their "liking for Ike," but as early as 1954 and in increasing numbers they, like many farmers, began to re-identify their own economic welfare with the Democratic party. The gap between Eisenhower's popularity and that of the Republican party widened rather than narrowed as his years in the White House progressed.

The hard-shell Republicans who should have been most pleased at the President's unanticipated sharing of their convictions have been disillusioned by his lack of fighting zeal. If the budget were to be balanced at a modest level, income taxes substantially reduced, the balance of functions between the Federal and state governments shifted, and the trend to big government reversed, it would require as many violent political struggles as it took to pass the New Deal in the first place. It would probably be necessary, for example, to pass a national right-to-work law, forbid industry-wide collective bargaining, and break the political activities of the labor unions. On no front has Eisenhower undertaken a struggle of this magnitude. If his limited physical strength and his limited intellectual interest in this sort of problem were not sufficient to debar such a conflict, his desire for national unity and harmony would in any case prevent it. The domestic consensus rests secure in his hands.

Arthur Larson, the quondam philosopher of "Modern Republicanism," propounded the thesis in his book *A Republican Looks At His Party* (1956) that the Republican party under Eisenhower's leadership had "for the first time in our history discovered and established the Authentic American Center in politics." The Eisenhower administration expressed an "American Consensus." The steady decay of the Republican party at the state and

congressional district level throughout the Eisenhower years is enough to discredit this thesis. Parties which have formulated a widely accepted consensus on the big contemporary issues and are united behind a great leader do not show these alarming signs of disaffection and disrepair.

There is an American Consensus on the issues, but it was developed by Franklin Roosevelt and developed further in some respects by Truman. Eisenhower has been content to leave it undisturbed. His few attempts to return to the "little government" of a bygone day have been abortive. Two statistics alone are enough to account for his defeat: there are 40,000,000 more Americans than there were twenty years ago and more than one-third of all Americans now live in states other than those in which they grew up. The growing population makes the pressure for increased government services irresistible and the mobility of that population makes it equally inevitable that the people look to the Federal government to supply those services as state loyalties disappear and state boundaries become unreal.

Eisenhower did disturb the old political balance of power as distinguished from the consensus on issues, but he had not the energies, the talents, nor the experience to exploit his personal triumphs for his party's advantage.

Eisenhower has been the great leader *manqué*. His dignified bearing, his warm flashing smile, his easy manners made him seem a man with whom most voters could feel at ease, and his hero's reputation made him seem a man in whom they could safely trust their destiny. Has their trust been misplaced? The answer lies in America's margin for error. Eisenhower and his administration have lived off the accumulated wisdom, the accumulated prestige, and the accumulated military strength of his predecessors who conducted more daring and more creative regimes. If our margin for error is as great as it has traditionally been, these quiet Eisenhower years will have been only a pleasant idyll, an inexpensive interlude in a grim century. If our margin for error is much thinner than formerly, Eisenhower may join the ranks of history's fatal good men, the Stanley Baldwins and the James Buchanans. Their intentions were good and their example is pious, but they bequeathed to their successors a black heritage of time lost and opportunities wasted.

THE UNITED STATES, THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE END OF THE WARTIME ALLIANCE

A perilous tension between the United States and the Soviet Union has dominated international policy making since the end of World War II and, especially during the 'fifties, has had nearly as much importance for American domestic politics as well. For nearly twenty years now the world's two mightiest powers, once partners in the destruction of the Nazi war machine, have been virtually implacable foes. How did the great wartime allies develop such mutual hostility so soon after a triumphant partnership? This is the question that Staughton Lynd, Assistant Professor of History at Yale University, attempts to answer in the article that follows.

A simple answer to the question, generally popular with the American press and with some scholars as well, is that the "Cold War" (as Walter Lippmann dubbed the situation in 1948) derived at the start from the Soviet Union's longstanding and frequently declared dedication to the eventual conversion of the world to the communist system. This is a comforting answer in the sense that it thoroughly exonerates American diplomacy; on the other hand, such an answer offers no hope of an end to the tension — to "the balance of terror," as it has become — short of the triumph, by persuasion or by war, of one or the other of the great conflicting social systems.

Other answers are at least more interesting because they permit a broader scope for self-questioning and because they offer the possibility of a workable solution short of the unlikely or the catastrophic. One is that the Russians are not so dedicated to communism that they would willingly risk war to promote it forcibly, that they are and have usually been first of all concerned with their own national security and particularly with the security of their western frontier, and that tensions could be substantially reduced if the west would consent to a more or less formal division of Europe, and perhaps the globe, into "spheres of influence."

In this interpretation, American ideology shares with Soviet ideology responsibility for the tensions and frequent "brinkmanship" of recent diplomacy. American policy shaped by President Roosevelt during the war rejected outright, as immoral, suggestions that the destinies of minor nations be set within spheres of major-power influence. The United States insisted on the principle of self-determination for all nations, including particularly Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Rus-

sia's other western neighbors, to say nothing of Germany, eventually, as well. America's deeply rooted commitment to a foreign policy governed by the liberal ideology, in which diplomacy must be handmaiden to principle, not politics, and the internal pressure of ethnic voting blocs, especially Polish, Slavic, and anti-Bolshevik Russian-Americans, lay behind the Roosevelt-Truman policy of 1944-1946. Ideological commitments aside, it is not hard to understand why Russia should regard the American policy as unacceptable. For traditional nationalistic or ethnic reasons alone, the Russians contended, self-determination for the nations on their western frontier would mean the establishment of hostile nations on the frontier; it would mean eventually a hostile Germany, too, and essentially the recreation of the status quo ante in Central Europe, a condition that had led to a war that nearly bled Russia white. From this viewpoint, American insistence on self-determination could be seen only as evidence of calculated ill will; moreover, American rejection of spheres of influence in Europe while we were busy establishing our influence in Japan, Korea, and elsewhere in the Pacific could be considered evidence of hypocrisy.

All our insistence upon principle, of course, could not roll back the Russian army in Central Europe. We retrenched with a policy of "containment," which was designed merely to meet Soviet expansionist thrusts where they might appear. Thus we accepted of necessity what we had rejected in principle. The alternative was to make war on the Soviet Union.

American domestic politics, of course, precluded the surrender of self-determination in principle even while Soviet military power precluded self-determination in fact. The political opposition especially, growing bitter and perhaps even irresponsible because of its long deprivation of power, compelled the incumbent administration to put on its boldest face. Congressional demands that President Truman take a "tough line" against Soviet efforts to create sympathetic ("satellite") governments in the countries occupied by her troops were matched only by the demands for rapid demobilization of our military immediately following the Axis' surrender. The weaker the west became militarily, the more belligerent became the diplomatic exchanges. The communist coup in Czechoslovakia (February, 1948), the Berlin blockade (July, 1948-May, 1949), the communist victory in China (fall 1949), and the outbreak of the Korean War (June, 1950) gave substantial force to the interpretation that laid the blame for international tensions to Soviet intransigence. When, on American initiative, the "tough line" took substantive form in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and German rearmament, western foreign policy had come in effect to confirm the very division of Europe that the U.S. had in principle refused to countenance.

Communist belligerency in Europe and Asia and partisan politics at home continued to preclude a settlement with Russia on the principal divisive issues. The Republican party victory in 1952 somewhat reduced the factor of domestic partisanship in this tense standoff. This

change was indicated when President Eisenhower was able to negotiate a settlement of the Korean conflict on terms that political considerations had made impossible for the Truman administration. The verbal "tough line" meanwhile had gravitated to its logical culmination in John Foster Dulles' formulation of the policy of "Liberation" (first set forth in "A Policy of Boldness," *Life*, May 19, 1952), which was frankly shaped to encourage rebellion within the Soviet orbit. But whatever force a policy of moral declaration and exhortation might ever have had was expunged in 1956 when Dulles, then Secretary of State, refused to commit American power to assist the Hungarian revolution. (Dulles had been similarly restrained during the Polish uprising earlier in 1956 and in the East Berlin riots of 1953.)

By declining to assist the rebelling Germans, Poles, and Hungarians, the United States effectively conceded the spheres of influence in Europe which Russia had insisted upon since 1944. The noticeable "thaw" in Russo-American relations in more recent years may owe as much to that de facto concession as to Russia's grave difficulties with Red China. That none of the factors underlying the "thaw" can be said to derive from a "tough line" policy lends weight to the proposals for "disengagement" urged by foreign-policy experts like George Kennan. For, if the liberalization of political conditions in the "satellite" countries is ever to take place (without a major war, that is), it can only come about if the change is not regarded by the Russians as a defeat or humiliation. On the other hand, experts such as former Secretary of State Dean Acheson insist that Soviet national purposes extend far beyond the mere confirmation of the status quo in Europe and elsewhere. From this viewpoint, the "thaw" can only be temporary. The west must maintain a position of strength from which we may not only negotiate confidently with the Russians but also contain the intrinsic expansionist tendencies of the Soviet system. In brief, we must learn to live with international tensions as long as the major power blocs remain committed, the one to and the other against Marxist-communist principles.

The literature of the "Cold War" is of course enormous, but significantly little of it appears in scholarly journals. On the one hand, we are still so close to the problem that book-length explication of the details remains crucial for any discussion that attempts to cover some major part of it. On the other hand, the less comprehensive analyses still constitute viewpoints based usually upon personal, undeveloped familiarity with the details, and thus (appropriately) appear in the journals of opinion. (Dulles' essay, "A Policy of Boldness," is illustrative.) J. Lukacs, *A History of the Cold War* (Anchor Book, 1962) is a competent survey of the general problem. I. Deutscher, *The Great Contest: Russia and the West* (Ballantine Books, 1961) is a balanced presentation, also in easily available form, by a western scholar looking at the issue from the angle of Russia's internal needs. *A Soviet View of the American Past; An Annotated Translation of the Section on*

American History in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (1960), annotated by members of the University of Wisconsin history department, may help students to understand how the Russian citizen must view the problem; it is available in paperback from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison). N. Graebner's *Cold War Diplomacy, 1945-1960* (Anvil, 1962) is a small collection of documents with a long and very readable commentary; more of the same appears in his less easily available hardback, *Ideas and Diplomacy* (1964) 631-869. S. Lubell's *The Future of American Politics* (1952; Anchor, 1956) is suggestive on American internal politics. Professor Lynd's article, which follows, contains other important references.

How the Cold War Began

STAUGHTON LYND

At the banquet which closed the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin all offered toasts. When it came Churchill's turn, he

addressed himself to the years ahead. He felt, he said, that all were standing on the crest of a hill with the glories of great future possibilities stretching before them; that in the modern world the function of leadership was to lead the people out from the forests into the broad sunlit plains of peace and happiness. He felt that this prize was nearer their grasp than at any time in history, and that it would be a great tragedy if they, through inertia or carelessness, let it slip from their grasp. History would never forgive them if they did.¹

We live today amid the ruins of that hope. Any responsible inquiry into the present controversies between the United States and the Soviet Union must find its way back, from the U-2 to Hungary and Suez, thence to Korea, Czechoslovakia, the Marshall Plan, and the Truman Doctrine, and so, finally, to that time and that failure. In those months of early 1945 which Herbert Feis, in his new book,² has called "between war and peace," the hard core of difference between East and West is to be found.

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¹ Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, 1957).

² *Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference* (Princeton, 1960).

None of us can presume to discuss this question without anxiety or passion. One finds it peculiarly difficult to bring to bear on the problem of the cold war the intellectual discipline which, say, the Spanish-American or even the First World War can now readily call forth. The shrill and strained atmosphere, the partisan interpretations of war and quasi-war have been with us for an uninterrupted quarter of a century. We live, move, and have our intellectual being in a habitually clamorous climate of opinion.

Yet how precious would be the gift of seeing the cold war, now, with the kind of perspective which commonly comes only after the passage of much time. There are very few international crises which in the historian's retrospect altogether justify the ideology or behavior of any of the participants. We know today that the War of 1812 began days after, on the other side of the Atlantic, the English Orders in Council which occasioned it had been revoked. Today many of us would be ready to join Henry Thoreau in his Concord jail to protest the war against Mexico. Years after the Spanish-American War, experts examined the torn hull of the battleship *Maine* and concluded that the explosion had taken place not outside the boat but within. The blundering or hypocrisy or chicanery which brought on these wars seems to us today inadmissible. In short, if we could only approximate the historians' collective judgment, a generation hence, concerning the cold war, we might be helped in our understanding of the practical alternatives that are presently before us.

In search of objectivity the American student may attempt to balance the work of Westerners by consulting Soviet accounts. He will be disappointed. It is true that Soviet historians are far more familiar with English, French, and German sources than Westerners are with publications in Russian. For example, V. L. Israelyan's *Diplomatic History of the Great Patriotic War* (Moscow, 1959; in Russian) cites ten American collections of documents and over sixty memoirs and historical works in English. It is also true that the skeleton of events narrated by a work like Israelyan's is full and accurate. But time after time crucial interpretations are woodenly self-justificatory. Human blundering and groping on both sides of the Iron Curtain are underestimated. Thus Stalin's attitude toward the treatment of postwar Germany is made to seem consistent at all times; and he is said to have refused Churchill's famous proposal in October 1944 to divide Eastern Europe into British and Soviet spheres of influence because "the Soviet Union in correspondence with its policy of non-interference in the inner affairs of other nations rejected all plans for the division of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence." Inversely, the Soviets tend to portray American policy as changing from white to black after the death of Roosevelt, whereas among Western scholars even those who are most sympathetic to Soviet

behavior in the cold war have stressed the vacillations and ambiguities in Roosevelt's dealing with the USSR.³

One turns back, perforce, to Western scholarship. Here two first-class scholars have been at work: Feis, in the two books already cited, and William McNeill of the University of Chicago, in his brilliant earlier account, *America, Britain and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-1946* (London, 1953). These works have a quasi-official character. Feis's books were, so he tells the reader, in part inspired by Averell Harriman, America's wartime ambassador to the Soviet Union. They draw both on unpublished papers of Harriman's and on the unpublished papers of the State Department (these have just been closed to scholars). McNeill's volume, similarly, was commissioned by the Royal Institute of International Affairs and scrutinized before publication "by a number of individuals familiar with the events narrated." Thus the works of Feis and McNeill are something more than individual interpretations. To a degree they represent the collective memory of British and American officialdom about their wartime alliance with Soviet Russia and how it broke down.

Perhaps because of their quasi-official character the Feis and McNeill books display the same defect as their Soviet counterparts. They narrate, but they do not really interpret. They do not face squarely the childlike and penetrating question, Why did the cold war start? Some of McNeill's sharpest observations are buried in footnotes. Feis concludes *Between War and Peace* with the moving sentence: "To choose life, the great nations must one and all live and act more maturely and trustfully than they did during the months that followed the end of the war against Germany." Moving, but also banal. Feis does not go beneath the surface of events in search of the specific men and motives that obstructed the choice for life, the inarticulate major premises which led each side to a point from which further retreat seemed inadmissible.

To go beneath the surface means, as I have said, going back. The climactic events of the six months after Yalta — the defeat of Germany, the San Francisco and Potsdam conferences, the testing and use of the atom bomb, all shadowed and confused by the death of Roosevelt and the political defeat of Churchill — brought into the open the conflict in objectives between England and America and the Soviet Union. But this conflict had existed in embryo from the first tentative discussions in 1941 of postwar aims among the three military partners. While the war lasted, each side, intensely needful of the other's military aid, tended to avoid direct confrontation of the latent political tensions. Even at Teheran (1943), perhaps the high

³ See the final chapters of William Appleton Williams' *American-Russian Relations, 1871-1947* (1952) and *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959).

point of Big Three harmony, McNeill comments that "Allied co-operation could be and was founded upon agreement on military strategy. Agreement on post-war issues was not genuinely achieved. All important decisions were left for the future after only vague exploration of the issues involved." Victory over Germany, together with the decision of the Truman cabinet that Soviet military assistance was not essential to the defeat of Japan, lifted the lid of a Pandora's box.

The characteristic, continuing objectives of each of the three powers had in fact become quite clear within a year of the German attack on the Soviet Union. When the Red Army, to the surprise of the highest military personnel in both England and America, survived into the winter of 1941-42, serious negotiation as to postwar goals began. Then as later Stalin underscored the fact that twice in thirty years Russia had been invaded through Poland, and insisted on a more westerly frontier (incorporation of the Baltic nations and the Curzon Line in Poland) and a friendly postwar Polish government. Then as later Churchill, also thinking in terms of his nation's security, showed himself ready to bargain with the Soviet Union on a *quid pro quo* basis but equally ready to invoke the threat of force if negotiation seemed inadequate; it was at this time that Churchill, having just signed the Atlantic Charter with its promise of democracy for "all the men in all the lands," told Parliament that the phrase was not meant to apply to the British Empire. In December 1941, Foreign Secretary Eden went to Moscow to seek an accommodation of Soviet and British diplomatic objectives.

Here American diplomacy intervened in a way which foreshadowed future Soviet-American tension. That December, and again in May 1942 when Molotov visited London and Washington, Secretary of State Hull brought strong pressure on the English government to avoid territorial commitments until a postwar peace conference. On the latter occasion, indeed, he threatened to issue a public statement dissociating the United States from any such agreement reached between Britain and the Soviet Union. The American objective, for Roosevelt and Hull as for Woodrow Wilson years before, was to prevent dictation to small nations so that they might determine their own destinies through democratic processes; and to substitute for the balance-of-power arrangements which seemed inevitable and natural to America's European partners, an international organization to keep the peace. Thus in the Second as in the First World War, American diplomacy sought nothing less than a diplomatic new deal, an altogether new start in the conduct of international relations.

Not only in objectives but in ways and means American diplomatic behavior in this first year of the war was symptomatic of much that was to

follow. Avoiding hard bargaining on specific issues, America sought — in the words of a Hopkins memo — to “take the heat off” the Soviet territorial demands by pushing hard for a second front (as well as by talking of a postwar international organization in terms which were, as Feis says, “vaguely magnificent rather than sturdy”). The United States of course had other substantial reasons for desiring a second front. But both Feis and McNeill make it clear that the Americans found it a “happy coincidence” that the military strategy which they favored, a direct assault on Germany through France, was at the same time the form of assistance which the Soviet Union desired above all others. The American hope, Feis writes, was that “the Soviet government was to be lured away from one boon by a choicer one, away from its absorption in frontiers by the attraction of quick military relief.”

By championing the second front and postponing to a later day the inherent conflict between the American concern for worldwide democracy and the Soviet preoccupation with the security of its borders, Roosevelt established himself, by the middle of 1942, as a mediator between Churchill and Stalin. As McNeill observes in a remarkable footnote, this relationship was a personal tour de force which rested on a peculiar and indeed artificial basis of fact:

The British public was perceptibly warmer in its feeling toward Russia than was the American public, among whom repugnance to socialism and consciousness of Russia's failure to join in the war against Japan were far greater than in Britain. On the other hand, the American Government in general assumed a more indulgent attitude towards Russia on current questions (for instance Lend-Lease), combined with a more rigid attitude on long-range issues (for instance, the question of the Baltic states) than did the British Government. The secret of this curious contradiction lay mainly in the fact that Churchill and Eden thinking largely in terms of a balance of power, wanted to bargain with Stalin, whereas Roosevelt and Hull thought in terms of abstract principles to which they hoped Stalin could, if treated indulgently enough by his wartime allies, be committed.

When in 1942 and again in 1943 Roosevelt failed to deliver on a second front, a foundation was laid for future ill-will.

Viewed in this way, Roosevelt's approach to the Soviet Union appears fundamentally similar to that of Wilson and to that of Eisenhower: personalities fall away, and the thread of a shared tradition stands forth. All three Presidents attempted to eschew diplomatic settlements based on a balance of power. Like Wilson at Versailles, and indeed in conscious recoil from Wilson's entanglement in secret wartime agreements, Roosevelt and

Hull during World War II sought to brush aside concrete, immediate points of difference in order to establish agreement on general principles of world organization. Feis says of Hull in 1943:

Over each disjointed problem the interested and rival powers were poised — ready to contest, bargain and threaten. This had been the customary way in the past by which questions of frontiers, political affiliations and the like got settled. He wanted to bring it about that all such exercises of national power and diplomacy would in the future be subordinated to rules of principle.

The Americans, McNeill agrees,

tended to think of the establishment of an international organization as a sort of talisman which would possess a powerful virtue to heal disputes among the nations. Instead of regarding international politics as essentially and necessarily an affair of clashing interests and struggle for power, Americans, both officials and the general public, tended to think that international politics were, or at least should be, a matter of legal right and wrong, and that the common interest of all men and nations in the maintenance of peace was so obvious and so compelling that only hardened criminals would think of transgressing against it.

Alike in placing too much reliance on the forms of international organization, Wilson, Roosevelt, and Eisenhower also have shared a tendency to evolve simplistic solutions to the internal problems of foreign nations. For all three men the sovereign nostrum for the domestic ills of other countries has been, "When in doubt, hold a free election." Roosevelt grasped the awakening of the colonial world but conceived it one-sidedly in formal political terms; less than Wendell Willkie did he perceive the universal challenge to the big house on the hill. Land reform, for example, was as germane to the emergence of democracy in Eastern Europe as were free elections. Indeed land reform was a principal bone of contention between the Soviet-sponsored Lublin government and the Polish government-in-exile. Yet the Big Three paid it scant attention in their interminable discussions of the Polish question.

One cannot avoid the suspicion that Roosevelt's intermittent demand for freedom in Eastern Europe did not altogether escape the tragicomic quality of Wilson's insistence that the revolutionary Huerta regime in Mexico conduct a plebiscite on its own legitimacy, or — *reductio ad absurdum* — President Eisenhower's recent proposal for a worldwide referendum on communism and democracy. In each of these instances, the American President expressed a sincere and idealistic concern, but a concern which did not really represent a practical alternative in the given situation. McNeill points out that "neither Roosevelt nor Churchill seems frankly to have faced the

fact that, in Poland at least, genuinely free democratic elections would return governments unfriendly to Russia." Therefore, he continues,

the democratic process upon which so many eulogies were expended could not produce governments in Eastern Europe (or in many other parts of the world) that would further the harmony of the Great Powers and prove acceptable to all of them. Men were not so uniform, so rational, nor possessed of such good will, as the democratic theory presupposed; and in talking of Eastern European governments which would be both democratic and friendly to Russia the Western Powers were in large part deluding themselves.

George Kennan has written in much the same vein of the American Open Door policy in the Far East. "Our constant return to these ideas," Kennan says, "would not serve really to prevent the conflict of interests in China from living themselves out pretty much in accordance with their own strategic, political, and economic necessities." Just so the State Department policy toward Europe during World War II, according to Feis, "tried to arrest the march of armies, the clash of civil wars, the forays of diplomacy by repeated affirmations of the view that principle should govern European postwar settlements."

This syndrome of American attitudes — a syndrome which Walter Lippmann has called "Wilsonian" and E. H. Carr "Utopian," and which has been best characterized by Kennan — threw up significant obstacles to the making of a peace. To say this is not to belittle the American dream of democracy and world organization. It is not so much the American goals in World War II but the lack of realism with which they were elaborated in specific circumstances that is disturbingly prophetic of much which liberals now like to think of as uniquely Eisenhowerian. How similar to latter-day criticisms of American diplomacy's lack of "initiative" are these words of McNeill describing Roosevelt's passivity as the need for postwar decisions bore down on him:

From early in 1942 the American Government had repeatedly proclaimed the principle that no final decisions on matters of post-war frontiers or systems of government should be made until the end of the war. The theory that a political vacuum could be maintained in Europe was absurd on its face; but this principle helped to hide from American officials the daily necessity of making decisions.

American indecision in the closing years of the war diminished the chances for postwar settlements in both Poland and Germany. Long before Hungary, United States foreign policy was encouraging hopes in Eastern Europe which it had no concrete plans to support. Thus, early in 1944

Roosevelt refused to "back in an unambiguous manner" the proposals for Poland agreed on at Teheran, instead

contending himself with amiable sentiments about "freely negotiated" and "friendly" settlement of the Soviet-Polish dispute. Clearly Roosevelt did not wish to grasp the nettle, hoping that Stalin and the Poles would come to terms of their own accord. But his attitude only confirmed the Poles in their obstinate disregard of the realities of their situation, and allowed them to cling to the belief that Roosevelt would come to their rescue.

"In this instance," McNeill continues, "and throughout the following year, Roosevelt tried to avoid the responsibilities of the new American power, and by not making himself clear to the Poles he stored up trouble for the future." Thus in October 1944, when Mikolajczyk went to Moscow to consult with Churchill and Stalin about Poland, he was astonished to learn that everyone but himself had thought that Roosevelt at Teheran essentially accepted the Curzon Line. At Yalta, Admiral Leahy warned Roosevelt that the vagueness of the accord reached on reorganizing the Polish government would permit the Russians to make their own interpretation: the President could only wearily reply, "I know, Bill, I know."

Of Germany, McNeill writes that "the American Government, because of its internal disputes and indecision, prevented even the discussion of a common Allied policy for Germany." Alarmed by the furor occasioned by the Morgenthau Plan, Roosevelt put a stop to all American efforts to make postwar plans for Germany from late 1944 until his death. "This ostrich attitude towards the future," says McNeill, "prevented whatever chance there may have been for arriving at Allied agreement upon policy towards Germany through the European Advisory Commission or in any other way, and left the subordinate American officials who were charged with the task completely at sea."

In default of an American initiative, what planning for peace took place in 1943-44 consisted chiefly of British and Soviet attempts to divide Europe between them into spheres of influence. The story of these attempts is an important one, for it suggests that the Soviets, like the West, felt in 1945 that past understandings between the Big Three concerning Eastern Europe were betrayed.

The pattern for postwar spheres of influence in the liberated European countries was established in Italy, however, not in Eastern Europe, and by England and America rather than by Russia. In theory the three military partners were committed to joint decision-making and to democratic self-determination within every European country, regardless of whose armies

were occupying it. But in fact, the Big Three tacitly recognized and accepted spheres of influence all over the world. In China, Feis writes, "Stalin and Churchill seemed willing to have the American government take the lead in directing the political evolution of that country; and the American government was assuming it. Similarly, it was understood that Britain could be to the fore in dealing with Southeast Asia." And Churchill said of South America: "We follow the lead of the United States in South America as far as possible, as long as it is not a question of our beef and mutton." The habits twined about these long-standing arrangements proved too strong to be offset in meeting the challenge of liberated Europe when it first presented itself in Italy.

England took the lead. Churchill wanted to keep the monarchy in Italy, and deprecated any statement about self-determination. Russia's desire to take an active role through a tripartite military-political commission was deflected by the fact that Western commanders retained power, and when Russia established independent diplomatic relations with the Italian government, its move was strongly resented and protested by the West. The powers which Russia wanted, however, were the very ones which England and America were later to demand in Eastern Europe and which the Soviets denied, pointing persistently to Italian precedents. Some Westerners foresaw the result of the West's behavior in Italy; thus Ambassador Winant wrote in July 1943, that "when the tide turns and the Russian armies are able to advance we might well want to influence their terms of capitulation and occupancy in Allied and enemy territory." But this view did not prevail and the outcome was, in McNeill's words, that "in Italy, Russia had effectually been excluded from participation in Allied decision-making, and the Western Allies could hardly expect to be treated differently by the Russians in Rumania."

As German resistance began to crumble and the Allied armies poured into Festung Europa, the volume and pace of political decision-making in occupied territory necessarily increased. England began to make independent approaches to the Soviet Union looking toward an agreement on spheres of influence which would safeguard the Mediterranean lifeline and put some limit to the Red Army's advance. "Experience," Feis comments,

was showing how hard it was to apply the rule of common consent in each of these unstable situations. And decision could not always wait. In brief, the diplomatic methods in use began to seem defective or unsuitable — awkward for war, ineffective for peace. Hence both diplomats and soldiers began to wonder whether an arrangement which made one or the other Allies the dominant authority in each of these situations was not the sensible way to end the discussion.

Churchill, more tersely, stated that in each of the occupied countries someone had to play the hand, and with this in mind he journeyed to Moscow in October 1944 to make his division of Eastern Europe with Stalin, and thus safeguard British predominance in Greece.

As in 1941-42, so in these negotiations of 1943-44 the United States preferred to remain, in the words of the Monroe Doctrine, an "anxious and interested spectator." Harry Hopkins intervened to change the text of Roosevelt's cable to Churchill referring to the latter's Moscow trip, so that the American President, rather than empowering Churchill to speak for him, insisted on retaining "complete freedom of action." The reserved American veto imparted a provisional character to the Churchill-Stalin agreement. Thus it was that Western policy toward Eastern Europe in 1945 wavered because England and America had not reached full agreement, but the Russians, as in the similar case of the second front, interpreted the wavering as simple bad faith. Stalin protested that he had no idea whether the governments of Belgium and France, created under Western aegis, were democratic; he simply accepted them. Did not the accord of October 1944, although expressly limited to provisional arrangements until German surrender, give him by implication a similar free hand in Eastern Europe?

The first test of the new arrangement came in Greece. In his effort to make the agreement with Churchill stick, Stalin stood aside while British troops crushed Communist-led Greek guerillas: in Churchill's words, Stalin "adhered very strictly to this understanding." At the same time — as Feis, McNeill, and Williams all agree — he attempted to curb the Communist parties in Western Europe, Yugoslavia, and China from bidding for power, lest such an attempt spark off armed conflict between the great powers. It was therefore something of an irony when the Chinese revolution seemed to the West to confirm its image of the insatiable expansionism of Russian Communism.

In the absence of firm tripartite agreements, particularly about Poland, the British government, hitherto the advocate of realistic acceptance of a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, at war's end found itself exploring American military assistance to contain the expansion of Soviet power. The upshot was as paradoxical as it was tragic. A sequence of events familiar in Anglo-American diplomatic history then took place. As in the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine, as in the formulation of the Open Door policy, the British government suggested to America a joint declaration of policy for reasons altogether in the realm of *Realpolitik*. As in the two preceding instances, so in 1945-47 the United States government proclaimed the policy as its own and lent it the panoply of a moral crusade.

Ten years later, in consequence, England was in the position of trying to restrain the partner which but yesterday it had to prod.

Looking back, it is still difficult to assign responsibility with any sureness for this critical turn of events. America, which realized the importance of creating the United Nations before the bonds of wartime partnership were relaxed, failed to see the comparable importance of more humble agreements about governments and frontiers, and this failure complicated the already inherent difficulty where two men so different in their points of view as Churchill and Stalin had to reach firm agreements. A number of prominent Americans, including Roosevelt and Hopkins, were deeply impressed by England's determination to retain its empire: this made them slow to accept Churchill's growing fear of Russian expansion, just as it blinded them to the truth that, in actual hard fact, America had always depended on the English empire to shield it from potential aggressors. Had the Soviet leaders been less suspicious and dogmatic than they were, they might well have been confused in responding to an England which did not have the strength to enforce its realism, and an America which did not seem to realize that idealism must be supported by something more than documents.

For the Soviets, such indecision on the part of the West must have encouraged the hope, championed by Trotsky after World War I, of carrying revolution westward on the bayonets of the Red Army. Advocates of the Russian interpretation of these events have quoted the Forrestal diaries to show that military leaders in the West did not really fear Soviet attack:⁴ but these quotations begin no earlier than 1946, when the readiness to mobilize military force to deter such attack had already shown itself. Feis and McNeill reiterate that we possess very little material with which to interpret Soviet intentions in the spring of 1945. But there seems no good reason to doubt that the Russians were ready to carry their influence as far westward as they could safely go without risking the danger of war.

The inertia acquired by supposedly temporary military arrangements, their tendency then to turn into a political status quo unless deflected by new agreements for which, after Yalta, the Big Three alliance suddenly seemed no longer capable, posed for the West a genuinely "agonizing reappraisal." It seemed that to keep on a friendly footing with Russia it was necessary to betray (as it appeared to the West) the Polish people on whose behalf England had gone to war. Roosevelt and Truman were not as different in their reactions to this problem as extremists of both the right and the

⁴ See Carl Marzani, *We Can Be Friends: Origins of the Cold War* (1952) as well as the books of W. A. Williams previously cited.

left would have one think: the President who sent the two most pro-Soviet men in American governmental circles (Davies and Hopkins) as his first envoys to Churchill and Stalin cannot have been, initially, bitterly anti-Soviet.

The course ultimately adopted was, of course, containment, and its error lay, surely, in making such a "posture" the *whole* of one's foreign policy. In itself, containment was simply the normal practice of diplomacy which sought to maintain a balance of power, and supported this effort with the threat of force; England has certainly never practiced anything else, and when the United States has tried to follow another course — as between 1801 and 1812 in our dealings with England and France — it has altogether failed. Containment was startling only in contrast with the Wilsonian idealism, today almost hard to remember, which preceded it.

What was novel and alarming was the exaltation of containment from one of many normal means to the entire substance of a policy. There was nothing in the idea of containment itself which would have precluded, for example, long-term credits for postwar reconstruction to the Soviet Union. Even if this had seemed impossible for domestic political reasons, such loans might have been offered to Eastern Europe. When in the Marshall Plan proposals the offer was finally made, the international atmosphere had become embittered, Communist parties had strengthened their hold throughout Eastern Europe, and it was too late. In a sense, Eastern Europe was the first underdeveloped area where we failed.

In its sudden, totalistic shift from a reliance on ideals alone to a reliance only on the threat of war, American policy after 1945 exhibited a characteristic tendency to go from one one-sided solution to its opposite, equally one-sided. The Darlan and Badoglio deals, the unconditional surrender formula, the dropping of the atom bomb, also suggest an extremism of expediency and violence which all too frequently was the sequel to the benevolent extremism of America's first intentions.

George Kennan has shown how this tendency of American international behavior to oscillate between extremes of idealism and violence is magnified by our habitual self-righteousness.⁵ "It does look," Kennan observes,

⁵ These quotations are from *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (1952). In his writings of that date Kennan altogether failed to apply his general critique of American foreign policy to its dealings with the Soviet Union. Whereas he could say of American conduct toward Imperial Germany in World War I that "you could have refrained from moralistic slogans, refrained from picturing your effort as a crusade, kept open your line of negotiation to the enemy, declined to break up his empire and overthrow his political system . . ." yet these were the very goals Kennan advocated for our policy toward the USSR. Whereas in general he counseled America to "admit the validity and legitimacy of power realities and aspirations, to accept them without feeling the obligation of moral judgment, to take them as existing and inalterable human forces, neither good nor bad,

as though the real source of the emotional fervor which we Americans are able to put into a war lies less in any objective understanding of the wider issues involved than in a profound irritation over the fact that other people have finally provoked us to the point where we had no alternative but to take up arms. This lends to the democratic war effort a basically punitive note, rather than one of expediency.

Again Kennan says, commenting on the intrinsic connection between self-righteousness and total war:

Whoever says there is a law must of course be indignant against the lawbreaker and feel a moral superiority to him. And when such indignation spills over into military contest, it knows no bounds short of the reduction of the lawbreaker to the point of complete submissiveness — namely, unconditional surrender. It is a curious thing, but it is true, that the legalistic approach to world affairs, rooted as it unquestionably is in a desire to do away with war and violence, makes violence more enduring, more terrible, and more destructive to political stability than did the older motives of national self-interest. A war fought in the name of high moral principle finds no early end short of some form of total domination.

Instances of such behavior are legion. One recalls how the “peace without victory” position which Woodrow Wilson proclaimed in January 1917 — which meant, if it meant anything, a negotiated peace — gave way in three short months to the complete conviction that autocratic governments could not be dealt with and must therefore be destroyed to “make the world safe for democracy.” Again, McNeill has caught this quality in Roosevelt’s attitude toward fascist Germany:

The conviction that Germany should be made to suffer for the wrongs done to the world by the Nazis was in a sense the obverse of Roosevelt’s belief in the goodness and rationality of mankind at large. If a nation somehow failed to exhibit goodness and rationality, thus challenging Roosevelt’s general belief about human nature, it endangered its claim to belong to humanity and deserved, Roosevelt came to feel, the severest sort of punishment.

It is as if, to sum up, the failure of reality to respond to innocent intentions (a lack of forethought as to means being itself considered a kind of innocence) calls forth a thirst for vengeance; then hope may give way to fear of

and to seek their point of maximum equilibrium rather than their reform or their repression” — “reform or repression” of the Soviet system were the very goals which Kennan’s influential writings of those years urged. Finally, whereas in treating America’s relations with Japan before World War II Kennan noted how American policy tended to bring about “the final entrenchment of the power of the military extremists,” he notably failed to see that the policy of containment he then advocated would have the identical effect on Moscow.

an opaque reality which seems suddenly out of control; and reality be made to suffer for its intransigence.

This transition was the more inevitable after 1945 because English and American policy-makers had persistently underestimated Soviet strength, and the awakening to the real nature of the postwar balance of power came as something of a traumatic shock. One reason for the slow Anglo-American response to Soviet post-war demands in 1941 had been, as Churchill and Hull candidly confess in their memoirs, the conviction that Russia would grow weaker as the war went on. The colossal Red Army rolling east and west from Soviet borders in the spring and summer of 1945 caused latent anti-Communism to come quickly to the surface of opinion and seem sensible policy.

Only then did many sincere and thoughtful persons in the West recall that the Soviet ideology, pressed on to the heroic defensive as it had been since 1941, nonetheless envisaged the transformation of capitalism to socialism throughout the world. Revolution from within was the classical means toward this end; but Marx had never imagined a situation in which socialism and capitalism, represented by different groups of countries, would duel for the allegiance of the rest of the world; and it was a still more basic tenet in the Marxist tradition that means were, in any case, secondary. This underlying tension between opposing social systems facilitated the transformation of cautious cooperation into hostility at a time when public opinion still basked in the glow of victory, and even the leaders of the three victorious powers had far from lost hope in peaceful negotiation. As McNeill puts it: "Each of the Big Three wanted peace and security and recognized that only their continued cooperation could secure these goals. But what seemed an elementary precaution to safeguard the security of the Soviet Union to the one side seemed Communist duplicity and aggression to the other."

If then, we return to the question, Why did the cold war start? the most fundamental answer might be: Because for the first time the challenge of authoritarian socialism to democratic capitalism was backed by sufficient power to be an ever-present political and military threat. It is a far more complicated and potent challenge than that represented by Germany in 1914 or Japan in 1941; it is the kind of challenge associated with the break-up of empires and the transformation of whole societies rather than with the ordinary jostling of diplomatic intercourse. In this sense, those who now speak of negotiation and disarmament as simple nostrums are being superficial, and those who invoke the American way of life are more nearly correct.

Yet containment, while recognizing the seriousness of the problem, would

appear to be an inadequate response. Even before the possession of atomic weapons by both sides made reliance on military reprisal archaic, containment was a one-sidedly negative policy which could lead only to slow defeat, and, by way of the frustration and fear thereby engendered, to war. It involved and still involves an identification of the United States with governments whose only qualification for our friendship is their anti-Communism, and which in every other respect go against rather than with the grain of worldwide aspiration. Only a narrow and superficial realism can look to such alliances for strength in the long run.

Is there a moral to be drawn from this alternation between the extremes of Wilsonian idealism and military "realism"? Ten years after he formulated the containment policy, George Kennan saw a moral clearly. "I should like to raise today the question," Kennan stated in 1957,⁶

whether the positive goals of Western policy have really receded so far from the range of practical possibility as to be considered eclipsed by the military danger, whether we would not, in fact, be safer and better off today if we could put our military fixations aside and stake at least a part of our safety on the earnestness of our effort to do the constructive things, the things for which the conditions of our age cry out and for which the stage of our technological progress has fitted us.

"Surely everyone," Kennan continued,

our adversary no less than ourselves, is tired of this blind and sterile competition in the ability to wreak indiscriminate destruction. The danger with which it confronts us is a common danger. The Russians breathe the same atmosphere as we do, they die in the same ways. . . . Their idea of peace is, of course, not the same as ours. . . . But I see no reason for believing that there are not, even in Moscow's interpretation of this ambiguous word, elements more helpful to us all than the implications of the weapons race in which we are now caught up. And I refuse to believe that there is no way in which we could combine a search for those elements with the pursuit of a reasonable degree of military security in a world where absolute security has become an outmoded and dangerous dream.

⁶ These quotations are from *Russia, the Atom and the West* (1957).

RACIAL CRISIS IN AMERICA

The postwar activities and organizations that Professor August Meier of Roosevelt University discusses in the following article have been largely responsible for the recent spate of books and articles about the "New Negro" and the "Negro Revolution" both of which were born supposedly in the last decade or so. This much needed and long overdue attention is essentially healthy, but it also raises a number of important problems. The condition and development of American Negroes has so long been neglected that far too many current assessments are being written in a historical vacuum. The most obvious way to explain recent events is to speak of a "New Negro" who is no longer willing to acquiesce in his own debasement. There is, of course, a strong element of validity here, for much about American Negroes in the mid-20th century is new. At the beginning of this century most Negroes in the United States lived in the south and were rural. By 1960 almost half lived in the north and some 73% were urban. These demographic changes, of course, have had important social, economic, and political implications. As Negroes moved from rural to urban areas, their economic position and occupational opportunity increased markedly. As they moved from the south to the north, their political position improved greatly. And in both shifts, the possibility of better education was enhanced. Thus by mid-century Negroes were in a better economic, social, and political position than ever before to protest against their condition. The rise of independent African nations under their own leaders, as Harold Isaacs has argued in *The New World of Negro Americans* (New York, 1963), probably has also affected the determination of American Negroes to change their lot.

But for all of the possible validity of the "New Negro" concept, it leaves too many questions unanswered and, indeed, unasked. The forces that have wrought changes in the Negro community have been not cataclysmic but cumulative. Generation after generation of white Americans have been convinced that they were confronted by a "New Negro." Indeed, the term itself is not a creation of the present age but was used at least as early as 1895 and has been ubiquitous ever since. In addition, the same social, economic, and intellectual changes that have altered the ideas and actions of the Negro have affected those of the whites as well, and with the same imprecision it is possible to speak of a "New White" who can no longer keep one-tenth of his fellow citizens in a position of inferiority with an easy conscience. It is neces-

sary also to speak of the changed world situation in which the United States, in its attempt to win the allegiance, or at least the neutrality, of the rising non-white nations, can no longer afford to sanction the maltreatment of its own colored citizens. "The biggest single burden that we carry on our backs in our foreign relations in the 1960's," Secretary of State Dean Rusk asserted in 1961, "is the problem of racial discrimination here at home. There is just no question about it."

As important as all of this may be in understanding the current racial situation in the United States, it is equally essential to know more than we do about American Negro history. Is today's Negro actually "new"? Have the majority of Negroes in the past really accepted their lot as docilely as we have been led to believe? Has the main current in past Negro protest simply been the desire to amalgamate completely within white society? On this last point, for instance, there is evidence to show that although the system in which Negroes have found themselves was geared not merely to keeping them in a subordinate position but also to destroying any vestige of self or race pride, there has nevertheless been a great deal of race pride and identification. This is still another subject that needs attention, so certain has white America been that the Negro could want nothing more than to be a white man. In fact, it has never been that simple; there has been what Professor Meier himself has called an "ethnic dualism" among American Negroes — a desire on the one hand to assimilate completely into white America, and on the other to maintain a separate identity as a Negro. To better understand the events of today, we must pay more attention to this strand of ethnocentrism, racial pride, and group solidarity that has had such important manifestations as W. E. B. DuBois' Pan African Movement, the African vogue of Negro artists and intellectuals in the 'twenties, the response accorded Marcus Garvey's return to Africa movement in that same decade, the Black Muslim movement of our own day, and possibly even such popular outbursts as the 1964 riots in northern cities.

More definite answers to questions like these will emerge only from a concerted effort to trace the history of Negroes in the United States. The impact of the slave experience upon Negroes has been made clearer by Kenneth Stampp's major study, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York, 1956), and Stanley Elkin's provocative inquiry, *Slavery* (Chicago, 1959), and the debate aroused by these volumes will undoubtedly stimulate more investigation and understanding. But the post-emancipation experience of Negroes still demands far more study and comprehension than we yet have had. Works such as Professor Meier's *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor, 1963), John Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (New York, 1944), and the pioneer psychological study of Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey, *The Mark of Oppression: Explorations in the Personality of the American Negro* (New York, 1951), must be duplicated for every aspect of Negro life and thought; especially those concerning the less

articulate and unorganized masses. Studies of the American Negro in mid-century should, of course, be continued, but unless they are fitted into some larger historical perspective and understanding they will remain at best unsure and at worst misleading.

*Negro Protest Movements and Organizations**

AUGUST MEIER

After the Second World War, the general drift of American public opinion toward a more liberal racial attitude that had begun during the New Deal became accentuated as a result of the revolution against Western Imperialism in Asia and Africa that engendered a new respect for the nonwhite peoples of the world, and as a result of the subsequent competition for the support of the uncommitted nations connected with the Cold War. In this context of changing international trends and shifting American public opinion, the campaign for Negro rights has, since mid-century, broadened rapidly and has, in fact, in certain fundamental respects changed its character. Thus there has been a shift in emphasis from legalism to direct action. At the same time the scope of the attack has widened. Meanwhile the civil rights movement has become both more and more a Negro movement, and more and more a mass movement. Finally the movement has become infused with a new militance, a new sense of urgency, a new psychology of immediatism as, despite increasing Southern resistance, the racial barriers have begun to crumble in an accelerating fashion.

Pre-eminent among the civil rights organizations in 1950 was the NAACP. Often interlocked with NAACP leadership, though in a number of places

Reprinted from the *Journal of Negro Education*, Yearbook No. XXXII (Fall 1963) 437-450 (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press) by permission of the author and *The Journal of Negro Education*.

* Annotation is sparse for this article because the printed sources available are only of limited usefulness. Pre-eminent among them are the annual reports of the NAACP, various CORE publications (most notably, James Peck, *Cracking the Color Line* [1962]), SCLC's irregularly issued *Newsletter* and brochures, SNCC's sporadically published *Student Voice*, James Peck, *Freedom Ride*, (New York, 1962), Martin Luther King, *Stride Toward Freedom*, (New York, 1958), and publications of The Southern Regional Council.

Consequently this article is based very largely on two types of sources: interviews and conversations with a substantial number of leaders and activists in the civil rights field — notably in the NAACP, CORE and SNCC — and observations growing out of my close connection with SNCC's Baltimore affiliate, the Baltimore Civic Interest Group.

operating independently, were the voters leagues that had arisen in the South after the Supreme Court outlawed the white primary (1944); together with the NAACP they had raised the number of Negro registered voters in twelve southeastern states from about 233,000 in 1940 to about 1,110,000 by 1952. Playing second fiddle to the NAACP, but holding the key to future strategy, was the tiny Congress of Racial Equality. The nationalist movements were only a speck on the horizon, for since Garvey the alienated lowest class of urban Negroes tended to find hope and dignity in the pentecostal churches and in such chiliastic sects as those of Daddy Grace, Elder Macheaux and Father Divine.

At mid-century the NAACP could look back upon a forty-year history of deliberate but definite advance. Often regarded as conservative today, its program of agitation, and political and legal action, and its insistence upon attacking segregation and other forms of discrimination, was originally considered radical in contrast to the accommodating ideology of Booker T. Washington, then in the ascendancy. Leaving the task of enlarging employment opportunities to the conciliatory methods of the more conservative Urban League, the NAACP had tried to attain the Negro's full constitutional rights through political pressure and the courts. By 1950, in fact, the NAACP could pride itself upon an imposing series of Supreme Court victories, particularly in the fields of due process and equal protection in criminal cases, residential segregation, and voting. Taken together, *Smith v. Allwright*, (1944), invalidating the white primary, and *Shelly v. Kraemer*, (1948), declaring restrictive covenants unenforceable, seemed to open a new era. As early as 1946 the NAACP had made its first dent in the system of transportation segregation, and the McLaurin and Sweatt decisions in 1950, though applicable only to graduate and professional schooling, suggested that the separate-but-equal principle itself would soon be completely overturned. During the early 1950's the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund concentrated on both interstate and intrastate transportation, discrimination in publicly owned recreational facilities, and segregation in the public schools. By the middle of the decade the Supreme Court had made clearcut decisions in support of the NAACP's position in each of these areas, thus firmly establishing the basic legal principles supporting desegregation.

Due to a rise in membership fees, the NAACP had lost nearly half its members in 1948; in 1950 the total was just under 200,000. Since then there has been a gradual rise, the number doubling to nearly 400,000 in 1962. Income for the Association rose more rapidly: between 1954 and 1958 its revenues increased from \$465,000 to \$1,000,000. Today the NAACP spends at the rate of well over a million dollars annually, while the National Legal

Defense Fund (founded in 1939 and since 1955 a completely separate institution legally and administratively) spends almost as much. Significantly the major increase in membership in the late 1940's and early 1950's was in the South, so that by 1955 fully half of the NAACP members lived there. The legislative attack on the NAACP in the South after the 1954 Supreme Court decision (the Association is still under injunction not to operate in Alabama), the economic reprisals taken against NAACP leaders and parents who tried to register their children in previously all-white schools, and the harassment and violence to which the Association's leaders were subjected in the white South's campaign against the organization, did not lead to a decline in membership — in fact Negroes rallied to it just because it was under such bitter attack.

During the late 1940's and early 1950's branch activity in the North concentrated largely on obtaining passage of fair employment and fair housing acts; in the border states and upper South the principal emphasis was on litigation to secure the use of public recreational facilities; and in the South generally this period witnessed considerable voter registration activity. During the second half of the decade Southern branches were engaged in extensive litigation against the South's massive resistance to school desegregation and subsequently against the more subtly drawn pupil-placement laws. Throughout the country during the late fifties there was a heavy accent on voter registration: it was felt that in the ballot lay the key to obtaining civil rights legislation and a sympathetic policy on the part of public officials. Increased income for the association made it possible to employ staff specialists first in labor, since 1958 in housing and voter registration, and quite recently in education. Both these, by advising branches on how to work in their fields, and the burgeoning field staff (which grew from less than half a dozen in 1950 to twenty-seven in 1963), vastly stimulated NAACP activity on all fronts. The effort to eliminate discriminatory practices by trade unions had become a major concern by the middle of the decade; political and legal pressures were employed to see that publicly financed housing would be open to all; and recently the attack on de facto school desegregation in the North has become a major concern. Prior to 1960 non-violent direct action was a more peripheral matter for NAACP branches — but in 1958 and 1959 NAACP college and youth chapters in Oklahoma City and St. Louis engaged in successful sit-ins, and elsewhere, as in Louisville and Baltimore, adult branches sponsored direct action. Nevertheless, looking back over the decade of the 1950's it is clear that the NAACP's chief concerns had been to increase the number of voters and to attack segregation in all its manifestations with both legal and political pressures.

Established in 1942, CORE was much younger than the NAACP, and in 1950 was still a small, chiefly white organization, confined to the North and a few border communities, and lacking even a single paid staff member. Contrary to popular impression, the use of nonviolent direct action was not a product of the postwar era, but of the depression, for CORE's origins lay in the activities of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a Quaker social-action organization. This group of religious pacifists combined Gandhi's technique of *satyagraha* with the sit-down tactics of the Detroit automobile strikers, to produce the sit-in. F.O.R.'s synthesis of union tactics (including picketing) with Gandhian nonviolence was tested on a limited scale beginning around 1940. Then, in order to attract people whose interests lay in race relations rather than in philosophical pacifism, some of the F.O.R. leaders founded CORE.

CORE's membership¹ and activity had been in the North during the 1940's, and in the border states at the turn of the decade and early 1950's. In 1956 CORE employed a paid field worker for the first time, and began its work in the Deep South, both by nibbling at the edges and, more daringly, engaging in activity in South Carolina.² Like the NAACP, CORE always aimed at the attainment of full citizenship in all areas. But at first it was chiefly concerned with public accommodations. Though back in the early 1950's St. Louis CORE pioneered in the technique — later so effectively employed and popularized by the Philadelphia ministers — to obtain employment through selective buying campaigns, this did not become a major emphasis until fairly recently, and not until 1959-1960 did CORE use direct action to secure desegregation of privately owned apartment houses. Today in the North CORE concentrates on unemployment and housing, with some work in school desegregation; in the South it concentrates on places of public accommodation and to a lesser extent on voter registration.

CORE pioneered in the use of *satyagraha* in this country, but it was the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956 that dramatically brought it to the attention of the nation, and the Negro community in particular. And it has been Martin Luther King, whom the bus boycott catapulted into prominence, who has now become the leading symbol of this strategy. Even before a court decision (obtained by NAACP lawyers) had spelled success for

¹ There is no accurate record of CORE's membership, since the national office lists only contributors to the national body and chapter officers. Its growth, however, is reflected in the fact that these numbered less than 2,000 in 1950, 26,000 on the eve of the 1961 Freedom Ride, and 61,000 as of May 1963.

² Actually CORE's first foray into the South was its Freedom Ride in the Upper South in 1947.

the Montgomery Improvement Association, a similar movement had started in Tallahassee,³ and afterwards one was undertaken in Birmingham where, following the state's injunction against the NAACP, a group of ministers headed by Fred Shuttlesworth had established the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. About the same time there appeared the Tuskegee Civic Association, which undertook a three-year long boycott of local merchants in response to the state's legislature gerrymander that placed practically all Negro voters outside of the town's limits — a campaign crowned with success when the Supreme Court ruled the gerrymander illegal in 1960.

The happenings in Montgomery, Tallahassee, Birmingham and Tuskegee were widely heralded as indicating the emergence of a "New Negro" in the South — militant, no longer fearful of white hoodlums, police and jails, and willing to use his collective economic weight to attain his ends. Seizing upon the new mood, King in 1957 established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference — an organization of affiliates rather than a membership organization like NAACP and CORE. Ideologically committed to a thoroughgoing philosophical pacifism of the Gandhian persuasion, SCLC's program includes not only the now-familiar demonstrations but also citizenship training schools which prepare leaders to go out into local communities and push voter-registration. SCLC's budget comes chiefly from contributions — its income for the year ending August 31, 1961, was nearly \$200,000; its budget this year is almost two and a half times as much — approximately \$375,000.

The NAACP thought it saw the beginning of the end in the 1954 Supreme Court decision. And truly, it was only the *beginning* of the end. Impressive as it was to cite the advances — especially legal advances — made in the post-war years, in spite of state laws and supreme court decisions something was clearly wrong. Negroes were still disfranchised in most of the Deep South; Supreme Court decisions in regard to transportation facilities were still largely ignored there; discrimination in employment and housing was the rule, even in states with model civil rights laws; and after 1954 the Negro unemployment rate grew constantly due to recessions and automation. And then, as we have noted, there was the rise of Southern white militance in response to the 1954 decision, best represented by the White Citizens Councils.

At the very time that legalism was thus proving itself a limited instru-

³ A superb illustration of the subtleties and complexities involved in any analysis of the competitive rivalry among the various civil rights organizations, which will be discussed below, is the fact that this movement was led by Rev. Mr. C. K. Steele, president of the Tallahassee branch of the NAACP, and subsequently (while still NAACP president) a vice-president of King's SCLC and chairman of its Tallahassee affiliate. Similar situations existed for a while in Atlanta and in Nashville.

ment, Negroes were gaining a new self-image of themselves as a result of the rise of the new African nations; King and others were demonstrating that nonviolent direct-action could be effective in the South; and the new laws and court decisions, the gradually increasing interest of the federal government, the international situation, and the evident drift of white public opinion, had developed in American Negroes a new confidence in the future. In short there had occurred what has appropriately been described as a revolution in expectations. Negroes no longer felt that they had to accept the humiliations of second-class citizenship, and consequently these humiliations — somewhat fewer though they now were — appeared to be more intolerable than ever. This increasing impatience — and disillusionment — of Negroes accounted for the rising tempo of nonviolent direct action in the later 1950's which culminated in the student sit-ins and the Freedom Ride of 1960-1961.

Symptomatic of this impatience and disillusionment was the stepped-up campaign against trade-union discrimination. During the 1930's the CIO unions had made a new departure in establishing nondiscriminatory policies. However, the Civil Rights Committee of the merged AFL-CIO made little, if any, significant progress. While the chief charges of discrimination were still directed at the old AFL unions, notably in the building trades, there was also increasing dissatisfaction with the policies of the industrial unions. For example, even the United Automobile Workers — known for its liberalism until 1962 — had no Negroes among its chief executives and policy makers. Beginning in 1958 the NAACP openly attacked its allies in the labor movement for abdicating their responsibility in regard to erasing the color line within the trade unions. In the Spring of 1960, A. Philip Randolph established the Negro American Labor Council, to fight against discrimination from within the AFL-CIO. With a board consisting chiefly of staff people from the AFL-CIO unions, the NALC is made up of affiliates in a number of cities; a year after its formation it claimed between seven and ten thousand members. It lacks a paid staff, but it has been a valuable platform for agitation and a mighty symbol of the Negro worker's discontent.

Many date the new departure in the tactics of the civil rights movement from the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 — and the impact of this event is not to be minimized. But it seems to me that the really decisive break with the past came with the college student sit-ins that started spontaneously at Greensboro in 1960. This was so for several reasons. For one thing these sit-ins involved the use of nonviolent direct action on a massive, south-wide scale, never before attempted. Secondly, they involved tens of thousands of students, thousands of whom were arrested — an involvement of numbers of people heretofore inconceivable. Thirdly, it began a period —

in which we are still living — in which the spearhead of the civil rights struggle has come from the youth. Of course the adults in the Negro community rallied to the aid of the students and supplied essential legal and financial assistance. But it has been the youth who have been the chief dynamic force in revamping the strategy of the established civil rights organization — who in turn felt it necessary to do something in order to retain leadership in the movement.

The NAACP almost immediately swung into action, and the national office deliberately speeded up the formation of youth councils and college chapters with the specific purpose of engaging in demonstrations, while national staff members went to regional NAACP conferences that spring and knocked heads together in a strong effort to obtain local NAACP participation and support for this type of mass action. In fact, much of the sit-in activity during 1960 was carried on by NAACP youth councils and college chapters. Like the NAACP, SCLC sought to get on the student bandwagon, and it sponsored the Raleigh Conference at which the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee was established — though SNCC and SCLC later drifted apart. SNCC is theoretically a coordinating committee of affiliated youth groups in the Southern and border states; actually, for the most part a small group in Atlanta engages in action of its own choosing, and enlists the aid of people in the local communities where it decides to work. SNCC has been extraordinarily effective. Though it has the most modest budget of any of the civil rights organizations (it operated last year on \$120,000), and its field secretaries work on a subsistence basis, and although it has been less publicized than the other organizations, it has probably supplied the major drive for the civil rights movement in the South. CORE in 1960 seemed to be in the doldrums, its techniques appropriated by more vigorous and lusty successors. But in 1961, following the Freedom Ride to Alabama and Mississippi, CORE re-emerged as in many ways the most imaginative and resourceful of the civil rights organizations in the application of the tactics in which it had pioneered.

The events of 1960 and 1961 ushered in a period of intense competitive rivalry for prestige and power in the civil rights field. It has been a four-way struggle — between SCLC, NAACP, SNCC and CORE (though even the Urban League has set forth upon more aggressive policies). Of the four it may be said that SNCC has probably been the most dynamic force, closely seconded by CORE. While various SCLC affiliates have taken the lead in nonviolent direct action in their communities, especially where local NAACP branches are dominated by conservative leadership, King, functioning chiefly as a symbolic or “spiritual” leader, has ordinarily moved into situations which others have begun to lend the magic of his image to the

support of the local movement. Moreover, in many communities there have sprung up local organizations, established very often by ministers of working-class churches, taking various names, and unattached to any national body. Sometimes these are "umbrella" organizations, including within them local units of national organizations; at times they are entirely independent of, though not necessarily inimical to the NAACP or other established groups. As the oldest and therefore the most bureaucratic of the civil rights organizations, in many localities dominated by older, conservative leaders, the NAACP has quite naturally been on the defensive in a number of places. But it is impossible to generalize about the NAACP. While some branches have resisted the direct action techniques, others have embraced them wholeheartedly. There are cases of militant cliques ousting conservative leadership within NAACP branches; in Philadelphia for example the older leaders found their homes picketed with signs calling them "Uncle Toms." While the NAACP can scarcely take credit for initiating the direct action techniques, it is clearly invalid to stereotype it as run by a conservative Black Bourgeoisie wedded to legalism. Pushed and shoved by the exclusively action-oriented groups, the NAACP has pretty effectively met the challenge posed by them. In fact at the 1963 annual convention militants among the rank and file and the "radicals" on the paid staff triumphed against the more conservative elements. The convention enthusiastically endorsed direct action as the major NAACP tactic for the future, granted greater autonomy to the youth, and called upon the National Board to adopt procedures for removing do-nothing conservative leadership from the branches.

However, the NAACP's predominance in the civil rights field, not seriously contested as late as 1960, has been broken. Often in fact one gets the impression that the rivalry among the different groups is not due so much to differences in philosophy, tactics or degree of militancy as much as to a power struggle for hegemony in the civil rights movement. Painful as these conflicts have been, the rivalry of civil rights groups has actually proven to be an essential ingredient of the dynamics of the civil rights movement over the past three and a half years; for in their attempt to outdo each other, each organization puts forth stronger effort than it otherwise would, and is constantly searching for new avenues along which to develop a program.⁴ growing cooperation this past spring between CORE and SNCC. The best And despite all rivalries, when the chips are down, the different organizations usually do manage to cooperate. Especially significant has been the

⁴ For a fuller discussion of this thesis see August Meier, "The 'Revolution' Against the NAACP: A Critical Appraisal of Louis Lomax's *The Negro Revolt*," *Journal of Negro Education*, 32:148-152, Spring 1963.

example of this cooperation amidst rivalry is the fact that all of these organizations, along with others, worked together in sponsoring the August 28th March on Washington.

Two of the most significant aspects of the civil rights movement since 1960 are that it has become increasingly a Negro movement and at the same time increasingly a mass movement. The two developments are not unrelated; and both of them, of course, had their origins well before 1950. The NAACP membership and branch leadership has always been almost entirely Negro; but at the start most of the staff and executive board were liberal whites. In 1921 the NAACP employed its first Negro executive secretary, James Weldon Johnson; in 1933 its legal staff came under Negro direction when Charles Houston took over; and today only two NAACP staff members are white (though the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's chief counsel has been a white man, Jack Greenberg, since Thurgood Marshall was elevated to the bench). Constitutional changes made in 1947 and 1962 have permitted greater membership participation in the election of the national board; one result of this has been a decline in the number of whites on it — today only a dozen whites remain out of a membership that in the coming months will reach a maximum of sixty. CORE started off as a predominantly white liberal middle-class organization; as late as 1960 perhaps only one third of its membership was Negro, and at that time its four chief executive officers, as well as its national chairman, were white. With the selection of James Farmer as national director in 1961, CORE's image changed markedly in the Negro community, and it was thereby able to attract far more Negro support. Today, of CORE's four chief executive officers two are white and two are Negro. While the majority of Northern CORE members are still white there has been growing Negro participation in that section, and in the South CORE's membership is almost entirely Negro. The climax to these developments came at CORE's 1963 convention, the first one at which a majority of the delegates were Negroes. The Southern Negro delegates really set the tone for the convention, and moved into positions of leadership. And for the first time in CORE's history a Negro was selected as national chairman. Randolph's March on Washington Movement during the Second World War adumbrated current tendencies in its insistence upon an all-Negro membership and leadership; Negroes, he said, must fight their own battle for citizenship rights. More recently, organizations like SCLC, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, the Tuskegee Civic Association, the Negro American Labor Council, and the newer local groups have been Negro organizations from the start. SNCC has avoided any form of organic union with the predominantly white Northern Student Movement for Civil Rights — though it and North-

ern white students generally have been a prime source of SNCC's financial support; and while SNCC has a number of white field secretaries, it consciously projects itself as a Negro led organization. There has been in fact a growing insistence that Negroes must take the initiative and leadership in achieving their freedom; that white liberals tend to be compromisers who cannot be fully trusted, though their financial support and participation in direct action is welcomed.

CORE's experience has shown clearly that in order to attract large numbers of Negroes to the civil rights movement Negro leadership is essential. And white liberals — and radicals — in the Movement have accepted this fact. The NAACP had originally appealed to the elite Negroes, and during the 1930's some of the younger intellectuals like Ralph Bunche attacked it for doing nothing about the problems of the masses. The Association modified its program somewhat, and during the 1940's and 1950's made an increasing appeal to working-class people, as its growing membership testifies. Actually it would be impossible to make any generalizations about the sources of NAACP branch membership and leadership today, because the variations from branch to branch are so considerable. At the risk of a great deal of oversimplification, and on the basis of general impression rather than careful investigation, one might say that in the South leadership tends to come from ministers, in the West from professional people, and in the Northeast from lower-middle class people such as postal workers. Leadership thus generally tends to be more middle class rather than either lower class or upper class. The nature of the membership of a branch, like its leadership, depends to a great extent upon specific local conditions and personalities. In some branches the more elite people in the community set the tone; in others the professional and business people show no interest and blue-collar workers predominate. CORE, originally composed of white collar middle-class people, since 1960 has found more blue-collar skilled and even semi-skilled workers joining its ranks, both in the North where it has moved into the area of obtaining employment for working class Negroes, and in the South. The youthful sit-inners of 1960-1961 were chiefly people of working-class origins — that is they tended to be upward mobile members of the Negro lower-middle and upper-lower classes — though their leadership was more likely to be drawn from people of middle-class origins. From the beginning the bus boycotts in the South were mass movements, and the same is true of newer movements like the Albany Movement and the selective buying campaigns being undertaken in a number of cities, though it should be pointed out that all classes of the community are involved in these efforts and that the middle and even upper classes are disproportionately represented in the leadership.

A striking development of the past few months has been the involvement of lower-lower class people, many of whom are unemployed or chronically so. It is this group that apparently was responsible for the brick and bottle-throwing in Birmingham and Jackson. Even more significantly some individuals of this class, heretofore avoiding participation in demonstrations sponsored by the direct-action groups, have begun to join in with the nonviolent direct actionists, but unlike them have not remained nonviolent in the face of attacks from white hoodlums, but have become involved in fracas with them in places like Cambridge, Maryland, and Nashville. In the North this group is chiefly concerned with obtaining jobs; in the South, despite a high rate of unemployed it is becoming involved in the struggle for public accommodations, though this is very possibly a result of the growing tendency to package demands for desegregation of lunch counters and other facilities with demands for jobs.

There are those who believe that overt violence on the part of Negro demonstrators is on the rise, and that in hardcore areas of the South, Gandhian techniques will not work and that disillusionment with nonviolent tactics will set in. This line of thinking and the recent outbreaks are reminiscent of the events at Monroe, North Carolina, in 1959, and recall Robert Williams' assertion that federal intervention would not occur until Negroes struck back at their attackers.⁵ Moreover, there is the possibility that the dire predictions in the daily press about possible racial violence may act in the nature of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Whether or not extensive violence occurs, astute leadership in the civil rights organizations will undoubtedly employ its possibility as a means of forcing quicker action from the white community.

In any event one must conclude that there has emerged a real thrust for achieving "Freedom Now" from the working class people — that is from the lower and lower-middle class people. SNCC, highly critical of the Black Bourgeoisie and white liberals alike, regards itself as the vanguard of the Negro masses — and to a remarkable extent that is exactly what the youthful demonstrators of the years since 1960 have proven to be. And this thrust from the working class — especially from working class youth — has been largely responsible for the recent dynamics behind the civil rights movement. In fact the competition for prestige and power among the major civil rights organizations is in large part a competition for control over the masses of working class Negroes. It is likely that a large part of the increasing militancy of middle and upper class Negroes is derived from the new militancy

⁵ Perhaps the best treatment of the Monroe, N.C., situation (from the point of view, however, of a Marxist), is Julian Mayfield, "Challenge to Negro Leadership: The Case of Robert Williams," *Commentary*, 21:297-305, April 1961.

of the working classes. As Bayard Rustin has said of Birmingham, here was a "black community [that] was welded into a classless revolt. A. G. Gaston, the Negro millionaire who with some ministers and other upper-class elements had publicly stated that the time was not ripe for such a broad protest, finally accommodated himself, as did the others, to the mass pressure from below and joined the struggle."⁶

Now until recently it seemed quite possible that the unskilled, lowest-class urban Negroes might turn to the escapist nationalist ideology of the Black Muslims, for this sect offered a sense of dignity and a future to those whom the civil rights movement seemed to neglect. More than anything else the increasing unemployment joined with the revolution in expectations created a climate in which the Black Muslims thrived. The Black Muslims are simply one of several nationalist movements — but the only one of any size: estimates of their number vary, but it is almost certainly below 100,000, though there are many sympathizers and admirers. Historically nationalism of the extreme variety typified by the Black Muslims has been usually found among the most dispossessed of the Negro masses (the principal exception being the large scale interest in colonization exhibited by the Negro elite during the 1850's), though there are certain tiny groups of nationalist intellectuals, like the avowedly black Marxist Monroe Defense Committee, and the Liberation Committee for Africa.

Just as the Garvey Movement was the lower-lower class counterpart of the New Negro of the 1920's, so the Black Muslims are the counterpart of the new "New Negro" of the 1960's. The literature about this movement is so extensive that it would be superfluous to discuss its program here.⁷ However, despite the stark contrast between the integrationist aims of the civil rights organizations, and the separatist ideology of the Black Muslims, it is important to recognize that the two have much in common. Both are manifestations of a militant rejection of white doctrines of Negro inferiority and white policies of discrimination; both are essentially a quest for recognition of the Negroes' human dignity. Both reflect the new self-image of American Negroes arising out of the rise of the new African state. Both exhibit dissatisfaction with the traditional, accommodating, otherworldly Christianity of the Negro masses, which offered rewards in heaven rather than on earth. And both are indications of Negro rejection of the philosophy of gradualism, and both exhibit a rejection of the liberal white paternalism. In part perhaps because they have sensed the increasing attraction of the direct-

⁶ Bayard Rustin, "The Meaning of Birmingham," *Liberation* (organ of the War Registers' League), June, 1963.

⁷ C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, (Boston, 1961), and E. U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: The Search for an Identity in America*, (Chicago, 1962).

action activities of the civil rights organizations which have been moving more vigorously into the area of employment discrimination; in part perhaps because they thought the moment opportune to make a bid for leadership of the entire Negro community, since March 1963 the Black Muslims seem to have made a turn to the right. There is now less emphasis upon separatism, more emphasis on the generalized abstractions of justice and freedom, and support is even urged for the programs of other groups which are working for freedom and justice for the race.

The influence of the Black Muslims on the civil rights movement is somewhat speculative. Negroes of all classes approve of their dramatic indictment of the American race system, and of their ability to place white men on the defensive. Their renown may have contributed to some extent to the tendency to assert pride in being black, or even of being black nationalists, that has enjoyed some vogue among Negro activists in recent years. Their activity may also have contributed not a little to the intensified activity of the more traditional organizations like the NAACP and Urban League, and may have helped alert the civil rights organizations generally to the importance of doing something vigorous about employment discrimination. Certainly fear of the Black Muslims has accelerated the efforts of influential whites to satisfy the demands of the civil rights organizations.

The new thrust from the Negro masses, the complex patterns of rivalry and cooperation among the various civil rights organizations, the increasing power of the Negro vote in the urban centers, the growing realization of the Negro's economic power that has derived from the successful boycotts, the obvious sensitivity of the government to foreign criticism of our racial system, have together resulted in a broadening and intensification of the Negro protest movement. Year by year and month by month the Negroes of the United States have been growing more militant, more immediatist. Civil rights organizations now make several demands together in a package, rather than fighting on single issues, as before, and are no longer satisfied with tokenism. The result is that the rate of change is being accelerated, and the Kennedy administration has been brought to seriously commit itself to sponsor major legislative remedies. But the dynamics of the situation are such that whatever Kennedy does will not be enough — both because Negro demands increase with every advance, and because the President is subject to counter-pressures from interest groups inimical to civil rights. Large-scale violence may or may not come about as a result of large-scale unemployment, Southern white intransigence, and increased Negro militance. But two things are certain — Negro militancy is bound to increase, and an accelerated tempo of advancement in civil rights appears inevitable.

POSTSCRIPT

The preceding pages were completed early in July. Over the past two months the Negro protest movement has been characterized by varied, and in a sense, contradictory tendencies. There appears to be a waxing nationalist spirit, and yet also evidence of increasing white support and participation; a growing belief that unity with white labor and greater socialization of the economy will be necessary to assure freedom and equality, and at the same time increasing evidence that white moderates — most notably churchmen and businessmen — are becoming involved.

The rising spirit of nationalism would appear to be the product of two forces. One is the growing sense of confidence and self-respect as advances are made. Evidence of this is to be found, for example, in a burgeoning interest among Negroes in Negro history. The other source of this nationalist spirit is the disillusionment with the pace of change, the continuing tendency of the Kennedy administration to compromise with Southern racists, the shock of increasing police brutality and white violence in the Deep South. All these combine to give Negroes a greater sense of isolation and alienation at the very time that white support for the cause of civil rights is increasing. One manifestation of this trend is the sentiment for an all-Negro "Freedom Now" political party. Oddly enough it would appear that this idea has been projected chiefly by the Socialist Workers Party (the Trotskyites), who are deliberately attempting to capitalize upon this nationalist sentiment in order to destroy the Democratic Party and thereby create, they hope, a truly revolutionary situation.⁸

Universal among civil rights leaders is the belief, growing over the past year, that there can be no really meaningful solution to the civil rights question without a solution to the nation's economic problems. Mass unemployment lends urgency to the Negro protest at the same time that it makes the attainment of desegregation and equal rights a largely empty gain for the masses. Some civil rights leaders foresee an "inevitable" shift toward the left and toward increasing socialization in the American economic system; and they suggest that potentially the Negro protest movement can play an important role in eliminating poverty for whites as well as for Negroes.⁹

⁸ For statement of the Trotskyite position see statement adopted by the 1963 convention of the Socialist Workers Party, in *International Socialist Review*, 24:103-113, Fall, 1963.

⁹ See statement by Bayard Rustin given at the Socialist Party Conference held in Washington, August 29-31, and published in *New America*, September 24, 1963; see also Loren Miller, "Freedom Now — But What Then?" *Nation*, 196:539-42, June 29, 1963.

Moreover, as a result of the March on Washington there has been something of a rapprochement between the civil rights organizations and the more "progressive" elements among the former CIO unions, and if this proves fruitful there will certainly be sharply increased pressure on the national administration to take more radical steps to eliminate unemployment.

On the other hand the March on Washington also actively involved in civil rights, for the first time, a number of white moderates — a few even from the South — who had heretofore displayed no interest. In addition to the March itself, the shock of the outrages in Birmingham both in the spring and in recent weeks, has served to arouse moderate elements hitherto unconcerned. An even more remarkable manifestation of this trend is the \$1.5 million raised among businessmen this past summer by Stephen Currier of the Taconic Foundation for the recently established Council for United Civil Rights Leadership and its allied Committee for Welfare, Education and Legal Defense.¹⁰

Thus the future direction of the civil rights movement is uncertain. It seems likely that the Urban League and NAACP will probably continue to be — relatively speaking — conservative forces, while SNCC obviously will continue to be the most radical. (It is undoubtedly sound strategy that there continue to be diverse approaches among Negro protest organizations.¹¹) It is predictable that the white moderates are also likely to act as something of a relatively conservative influence. The joining of disparate elements in the two major current civil rights coalitions will inevitably mean a degree of instability within them. For the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership ranges from the "moneybags" represented by Stephen Currier to the parsimonious SNCC people, while the March on Washington Movement ranges from churchmen who dread the idea of "revolution" to the SNCC activists who revel in the idea that they are "revolutionists." Strictly speaking the civil rights movement (including SNCC) is not properly labelled revolutionary, for the vast majority of Negro activists do not desire to overturn the social structure — however much they say they want to do this¹² — but rather they want to be included in it on a basis of equality. The Negro protest movement therefore is more properly described as a reform movement. Of course the differences between the radical and conservative elements in the

¹⁰ The best discussion of this money-raising effort and its significance is probably Reese Cleghorn, "The Angels Are White — Who Pays the Bills for Civil Rights?" *New Republic*, 149:12-14, August 17, 1963.

¹¹ For suggestive case study see Jack L. Walker, "The Functions of Disunity: Negro Leadership in a Southern City," *Journal of Negro Education*, 32:227-236, Summer, 1963.

¹² Thus the use of revolutionary-sounding language in John Lewis's censored speech at the March on Washington was actually metaphorical, rather than representing a genuine revolutionary ideology.

civil rights movement are not by any means a matter of mere semantics. There is a marked difference between eminent clergymen getting themselves arrested for trespassing — and getting bailed right out — at the Gwynn Oak Amusement Park in Maryland, last July 4, and the type of radical civil disobedience that would create a breakdown in the government of Alabama which SNCC is now recommending.

Negro protest organizations are therefore posed with knotty problems of strategy. It is apparent that, unlike Africa, the Negro protest movement in this country must depend upon substantial numbers of white allies for its success. Should, then, the major effort be made to hold and increase the support from the white moderates, as the abolitionists and other successful reform movements in this country's history were eventually able to do? Or should the stress be laid upon forging an alliance with the working-class whites and upon striving toward a more socialized economy? Indubitably the threat of an all-Negro party will push the Kennedy administration further along the road to civil rights; but would a successful party of this type, if it resulted in the victory of a reactionary Republican in 1964, serve to advance or retard the cause of civil rights? Should radical civil disobedience as proposed by SNCC be undertaken, at the risk of alienating considerable white support, but generating considerable international publicity and pressure? It is likely that all of these approaches will be attempted, and that like the competing civil rights organizations each of the competing strategies will play a part in the achieving of racial democracy in the United States.¹³

¹³ For perceptive comments on new directions in the Negro protest movement following the March on Washington, see article by Tom Kahn and remarks of Bayard Rustin and Norman Hill in the Socialist Party newspaper, *New America*, Sept. 24, 1963. For further discussion of the role of the radical revolutionary left-wing groups in the Negro protest movement see August Meier, "New Currents in the Civil Rights Movement," *New Politics*, 3:27-29, Summer, 1963.

THE REDISCOVERY OF POVERTY

It may be that the 'fifties will become known in history books as the Era of Great Complacency. Certainly reformers, intellectuals, and innovators generally, were on the defensive during most of the decade. Much of the outstanding commentary and scholarship during the period was concerned with the pressures for conformity in American society and with the popular resistance to liberal objectives (sometimes to liberalism itself). Packard's *Hidden Persuaders* (1957), Whyte's *Organization Man* (1956), Reisman's *Lonely Crowd* (1950) and *Individualism Reconsidered* (1954), Hofstadter's *Age of Reform* (1956), Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics* (1953), Bell's *The New American Right* (1955), and Lubell's *Revolt of the Moderates* (1956) are some examples.

What may have underlain the attitude was another feature of the era: America's apparent opulence. The 'fifties, it seems, was a time for self-congratulation about the great material success of American civilization. American abundance was the general theme upon which scholars began their searches into the quality of American life as well as into the problem of how the new nations of the world might come to enjoy similar success. (See introduction to Lively, "The American System," p. 3, above). In his effort to define the American national character, for example, historian D. M. Potter found abundance the key:

The compilation of statistics might be extended endlessly, but it would only prove repetitively that in every aspect of material plenty America possesses unprecedented riches and that these are very widely distributed among one hundred and fifty million American people. If few can cite the figures, everyone knows that we have, per capita, more automobiles, more telephones, more radios, more vacuum cleaners, more electric lights, more supermarkets and movie palaces and hospitals, than any other nation. Even at mid-century prices we can afford college educations and T-bone steaks for a far higher proportion of our people than receive them anywhere else on the globe.

It approaches the commonplace, then, to observe that the factor of relative abundance is, by general consent, a basic condition of American life.

The theme of Mr. Potter's book, *People of Plenty* (1954) is that "economic abundance . . . has exercised a pervasive influence in the shaping of the American character."

The theme of contemporary abundance was given its fullest treatment in J. K. Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* (1958). Interestingly, Galbraith considered it necessary to forewarn his contemporary readers that his book might be upsetting: "These are . . . days [he

wrote] in which even the mildly critical individual is likely to seem like a lion in contrast with the general mood." For, though the Harvard economist remarked that American civilization had essentially solved the age-old problems of scarcity and poverty, he argued that recognition of this accomplishment required a drastic revision of the "conventional wisdom" on political economy. Galbraith's point about poverty in America was not that it was too minimal to concern us but, on the contrary, that its survival in such an affluent society as ours is "remarkable" and "a disgrace." Nevertheless, because Galbraith stressed affluence and designated poverty as uniquely a "minority problem" in our society, *The Affluent Society* has not escaped a place on the shelf with the literature of complacency of the 'fifties. (Galbraith's *American Capitalism* [1952], A. A. Berle's *The Twentieth Century Capitalist Revolution* [1954], and David Lilienthal's *Big Business: A New Era* [1952] belong more certainly on that shelf.)

The 'sixties have so far experienced a different mood. To some degree, the Kennedy administration deserves credit for this change. Although in its domestic efforts that administration may have been the least successful since that of Andrew Johnson, it did convey a sense of vitality and urgency in its approach to some long-ignored problems. The presence of extensive poverty in the midst of our "affluent society" was one case in point. But there are other reasons for the change. One is that the poverty of a great proportion of the poor derives from social and legal discrimination against the colored people of our country, a fact that it was no longer possible to ignore when the civil rights movement at last achieved a militant stage by the end of the complacent 'fifties. America, as Michael Harrington says (in one of the books reviewed in the article that follows), had long *expected* Negroes to be poor; they were to be taken as "given" when one contemplated the problem of poverty in America. This attitude is no longer permissible.

The release of the 1960 census figures, of course, provided economists and statisticians with the raw materials for a rediscovery of poverty in America. One set of statistics in particular cast a pall on the exuberant optimism of the 'fifties; that is, the figures showing trends of income distribution. The statistics revealed that: (1) the share of income received by the lower 40 per cent of income recipients had not changed for twenty years; (2) occupational differentials in earnings (between skilled and unskilled) are no longer narrowing; (3) white-nonwhite income differentials have recently begun to widen after decades of gradual narrowing — in 1962, the median wage or salary income for nonwhite workers was 55 per cent of that received by whites, or about what it was in 1947 and 3 per cent lower than in 1958. The major reason for all three phenomena has been the displacement, by technological innovation, of a great part of the unskilled labor force. Although nonwhite workers have suffered disproportionately in this development, masses of previously "well-off" whites have suffered as well, which has given the problem the appearance of especial urgency in the eyes of

the rest of the country. (It was the white mining communities of West Virginia and Kentucky, not chronically impoverished Harlem, which received the earliest attention of the "anti-poverty" proposals.)

In the following article essayist Dwight Macdonald reviews several recent studies of poverty in America and, in his inimitable fashion, uses the findings for a broad commentary on the American scene.

For an exceptionally readable and reliable presentation of the problem of poverty in America, see *Rich Man, Poor Man* (1964) by Herman P. Miller, who for seventeen years has been a researcher for the Bureau of the Census.

Our Invisible Poor

DWIGHT MACDONALD

In his significantly titled "The Affluent Society" (1958) Professor J. K. Galbraith states that poverty in this country is no longer "a massive affliction [but] more nearly an afterthought." Dr. Galbraith is a humane critic of the American capitalist system, and he is generously indignant about the continued existence of even this nonmassive and afterthoughtish poverty. But the interesting thing about his pronouncement, aside from the fact that it is inaccurate, is that it was generally accepted as obvious. For a long time now, almost everybody has assumed that, because of the New Deal's social legislation and — more important — the prosperity we have enjoyed since 1940, mass poverty no longer exists in this country.

Dr. Galbraith states that our poor have dwindled to two hard-core categories. One is the "insular poverty" of those who live in the rural South or in depressed areas like West Virginia. The other category is "case poverty," which he says is "commonly and properly related to [such] characteristics of the individuals so afflicted [as] mental deficiency, bad health, inability to adapt to the discipline of modern economic life, excessive procreation, alcohol, insufficient education." He reasons that such poverty must be due to individual defects, since "nearly everyone else has mastered his environment; this proves that it is not intractable." Without pressing the similarity of this concept to the "Social Darwinism" whose fallacies Dr. Galbraith easily disposes of elsewhere in his book, one may observe that most of these characteristics are as much the result of poverty as its cause.

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Dr. Galbraith's error is understandable, and common. Last April the newspapers reported some exhilarating statistics in a Department of Commerce study: the average family income increased from \$2,340 in 1929 to \$7,020 in 1961. (These figures are calculated in current dollars, as are all the others I shall cite.) But the papers did not report the fine type, so to speak, which showed that almost all the recent gain was made by families with incomes of over \$7,500, and that the rate at which poverty is being eliminated has slowed down alarmingly since 1953. Only the specialists and the statisticians read the fine type, which is why illusions continue to exist about American poverty.

Now Michael Harrington, an alumnus of the *Catholic Worker* and the Fund for the Republic who is at present a contributing editor of *Dissent* and the chief editor of the Socialist Party biweekly, *New America*, has written "The Other America: Poverty in the United States" (Macmillan). In the admirably short space of under two hundred pages, he outlines the problem, describes in imaginative detail what it means to be poor in this country today, summarizes the findings of recent studies by economists and sociologists, and analyzes the reasons for the persistence of mass poverty in the midst of general prosperity. It is an excellent book — and a most important one.

My only serious criticism is that Mr. Harrington has popularized the treatment a bit too much. Not in the writing, which is on a decent level, but in a certain vagueness. There are no index, no bibliography, no reference footnotes. In our overspecialized culture, books like this tend to fall into two categories: Popular (no scholarly "apparatus") and Academic (too much). I favor something intermediate — why should the academics have *all* the footnotes? The lack of references means that the book is of limited use to future researchers and writers. A pity, since the author has brought together a great range of material.

I must also object that Mr. Harrington's treatment of statistics is more than a little impressionistic. His appendix, which he calls a coming to grips with the professional material, doesn't live up to its billing. "If my interpretation is bleak and grim," he writes, "and even if it overstates the case slightly, that is intentional. My moral point of departure is a sense of outrage. . . . In such a discussion it is inevitable that one gets mixed up with dry, graceless, technical matters. That should not conceal the crucial fact that these numbers represent people and that any tendency toward understatement is an intellectual way of acquiescing in suffering." But a fact is a fact, and Mr. Harrington confuses the issue when he writes that "these numbers represent people." They do — and one virtue of his book is that he never forgets it — but in dealing with statistics, this truism must be firmly

repressed lest one begin to think from the heart rather than from the head, as he seems to do when he charges those statisticians who "understate" the numbers of the poor with having found "an intellectual way of acquiescing in suffering." This is moral bullying, and it reminds me, *toutes proportions gardées*, of the habitual confusion in Communist thinking between facts and political inferences from them. "A sense of outrage" is proper for a "moral point of departure," but statistics are the appropriate *factual* point of departure, as in the writings of Marx and Engels on the agony of the nineteenth-century English working class — writings that are by no means lacking in a sense of moral outrage, either.

These objections, however, do not affect Mr. Harrington's two main contentions: that mass poverty still exists in the United States, and that it is disappearing more slowly than is commonly thought. Two recent dry, graceless, and technical reports bear him out. One is that Commerce Department study, already mentioned. More important is "Poverty and Deprivation in the U.S.," a bulky pamphlet issued by the Conference on Economic Progress, in Washington, whose national committee includes Thurman Arnold, Leon H. Keyserling (said to be the principal author of the pamphlet), and Walter P. Reuther.

In the last year we seem to have suddenly awakened, rubbing our eyes like Rip van Winkle, to the fact that mass poverty persists, and that it is one of our two gravest social problems. (The other is related: While only eleven per cent of our population is non-white, twenty-five per cent of our poor are.) Two other current books confirm Mr. Harrington's thesis: "Wealth and Power in America" (Praeger), by Dr. Gabriel Kolko, a social historian who has recently been at Harvard and the University of Melbourne, Australia, and "Income and Welfare in the United States" (McGraw-Hill), compiled by an imposing battery of four socio-economists headed by Dr. James N. Morgan, who rejoices in the title of Program Director of the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Kolko's book resembles Mr. Harrington's in several ways: It is short, it is based on earlier studies, and it is liberally inclined. It is less readable, because it is written in an academic jargon that is merely a vehicle for the clinching Statistic. Although it is impossible to write seriously about poverty without a copious use of statistics — as this review will demonstrate — it is possible to bring thought and feeling to bear on such raw material. Mr. Harrington does this more successfully than Dr. Kolko, whose prose is afflicted not only with academic blight but also with creeping ideology. Dr. Kolko leans so far to the socialist side that he sometimes falls on his nose, as when he clinches the inequality of wealth in the United States with a

statistic: "In 1959, 23% of those earning less than \$1,000 [a year] owned a car, compared to 95% of those earning more than \$10,000." The real point is just the opposite, as any citizen of Iran, Ghana, Yemen, or the U.S.S.R. would appreciate — not that the rich have cars but that almost a quarter of the extremely poor do. Similarly, although Dr. Kolko has two chapters on poverty that confirm Mr. Harrington's argument, his main point is a different and more vulnerable one: "The basic distribution of income and wealth in the United States is essentially the same now as it was in 1939, or even 1910." This is a half fact. The rich are almost as rich as ever and the poor are even poorer, in the percentage of the national income they receive. Yet, as will become apparent later, there have been major changes in the distribution of wealth, and there has been a general improvement in living standards, so that the poor are much fewer today than they were in 1939. "Most low-income groups live substantially better today," Dr. Kolko admits. "But even though their real wages have mounted, their percentage of the national income has not changed." That in the last half century the rich have kept their riches and the poor their poverty is indeed a scandal. But it is theoretically possible, assuming enough general increase in wealth, that the relatively poor might by now have achieved a decent standard of living, no matter how inferior to that of the rich. As the books under consideration show, however, this theoretical possibility has not been realized.

Inequality of wealth is not necessarily a major social problem per se. Poverty is. The late French philosopher Charles Péguy remarks, in his classic essay on poverty, "The duty of tearing the destitute from their destitution and the duty of distributing goods equitably are not of the same order. The first is an urgent duty, the second is a duty of convenience. . . . When all men are provided with the necessities . . . what do we care about the distribution of luxury?" What indeed? Envy and emulation are the motives — and not very good ones — for the equalization of wealth. The problem of poverty goes much deeper.

"Income and Welfare in the United States" differs from the other works reviewed here in length (531 big pages) and in being the result of original research; 2,800 families were interviewed "in depth." I must confess that, aside from a few interesting bits of data, I got almost nothing out of it. I assume the authors think poverty is still an important social problem, else why would they have gone to all this labor, but I'm not at all sure what their general conclusions are; maybe there aren't supposed to be any, in the best tradition of American scholarship. Their book is one of those behemoths of collective research financed by a foundation (in this case, largely by Ford) that daunt the stoutest-hearted lay reader (in this case, me). Based on "a multi-stage area probability sample that gives equal chance of selection to

all non-institutional dwelling units in the conterminous United States [and that] was clustered geographically at each stage and stratified with interlaced controls," it is a specimen of what Charles Lamb called *biblia abiblia* — things that have the outward appearance of books but are not books, since they cannot be read. Methodologically, it employs something called the "multivariate analysis," which is explained in Appendix E. Typographically, Appendix E looks like language, but it turns out to be strewn with booby traps, all doubtless well known in the trade, like "dummy variables," "F ratios," "regression coefficients," "beta coefficients" (and "partial beta coefficients"), and two kinds of "standard deviations" — "of explanatory variable A" and "of the dependent variable."

My experience with such works may be summarized as follows: (alpha) the coefficient of comprehensibility decreases in direct ratio to the increase in length, or the longer the incomprehensibler, a notion that is illustrated here by the fact that Dr. Kolko's short work is more understandable than Dr. Morgan et al.'s long one; (beta) the standard deviation from truism is inversely related to the magnitude of the generalization, or the bigger the statement the more obvious. (Beta) is illustrated by the authors' five general proposals for action ("Implications for Public Policy"). The second of these is: "Fuller employment and the elimination of discrimination based on prejudice would contribute greatly to the independence of non-white persons, women, teen-agers, and some of the aged." That is, if Negroes and the rest had jobs and were not discriminated against, they would be better off — a point that doesn't need to be argued or, for that matter, stated. The authors have achieved such a mastery of truism that they sometimes achieve the same monumental effect even in non-magnitudinous statements, as: "Table 28-1 shows that the proportion of parents who indicated that their children will attend private colleges is approximately twice as large for those with incomes over \$10,000 as for those with incomes under \$3,000." Could be.

What is "poverty"? It is a historically relative concept, first of all. "There are new definitions [in America] of what man can achieve, of what a human standard of life should be," Mr. Harrington writes. "Those who suffer levels of life well below those that are possible, even though they live better than medieval knights or Asian peasants, are poor. . . . Poverty should be defined in terms of those who are denied the minimal levels of health, housing, food, and education that our present stage of scientific knowledge specifies as necessary for life as it is now lived in the United States." His dividing line follows that proposed in recent studies by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics: \$4,000 a year for a family of four and \$2,000 for

an individual living alone. (All kinds of income are included, such as food grown and consumed on farms.) This is the cutoff line generally drawn today.

Mr. Harrington estimates that between forty and fifty million Americans, or about a fourth of the population, are now living in poverty. Not just below the level of comfortable living, but real poverty, in the old-fashioned sense of the word — that they are hard put to it to get the mere necessities, beginning with enough to eat. This is difficult to believe in the United States of 1963, but one has to make the effort, and it is now being made. The extent of our poverty has suddenly become visible. The same thing has happened in England, where working-class gains as a result of the Labour Party's post-1945 welfare state blinded almost everybody to the continued existence of mass poverty. It was not until Professor Richard M. Titmuss, of the London School of Economics, published a series of articles in the *New Statesman* last fall, based on his new book, "Income Distribution and Social Change" (Allen & Unwin), that even the liberal public in England became aware that the problem still persists on a scale that is "statistically significant," as the economists put it.

Statistics on poverty are even trickier than most. For example, age and geography make a difference. There is a distinction, which cannot be rendered arithmetically, between poverty and low income. A childless young couple with \$3,000 a year is not poor in the way an elderly couple might be with the same income. The young couple's statistical poverty may be a temporary inconvenience; if the husband is a graduate student or a skilled worker, there are prospects of latter affluence or at least comfort. But the old couple can look forward only to diminishing earnings and increasing medical expenses. So also geographically: A family of four in a small town with \$4,000 a year may be better off than a like family in a city — lower rent, no bus fares to get to work, fewer occasions (or temptations) to spend money. Even more so with a rural family. Although allowance is made for the value of the vegetables they may raise to feed themselves, it is impossible to calculate how much money they *don't* spend on clothes, say, or furniture, because they don't have to keep up with the Joneses. Lurking in the crevices of a city, like piranha fish in a Brazilian stream, are numerous tempting opportunities for expenditure, small but voracious, which can strip a budget to its bones in a surprisingly short time. The subtlety and complexity of poverty statistics may be discovered by a look at Dr. Kolko's statement that in 1959 "23% of those earning less than \$1,000 owned a car." Does this include college students, or are they included in their families' statistics? If the first is true, then Dr. Kolko's figure loses much of its meaning. If the

second is, then it is almost *too* meaningful, since it says that one-fourth of those earning less than twenty dollars a week are able to afford a car. Which it is, deponent sayeth not.

It is not, therefore, surprising to find that there is some disagreement about just how many millions of Americans are poor. The point is that all these recent studies agree that American poverty is still a mass phenomenon. One of the lowest estimates appears in the University of Michigan's "Income and Welfare," which states, "Poor families comprise one-fifth of the nation's families." The authors do not develop this large and crucial statement, or even give sources for it, despite their meticulous pedantry in all unimportant matters. So one can only murmur that the other experts put the number of poor much higher. (Though even a fifth is still over 35,000,000 people.) The lowness of the Michigan estimate is especially puzzling since its cutoff figure for poverty is \$4,330, which is slightly higher than the commonly accepted one. The tendentious Dr. Kolko is also unconvincing, in the opposite direction. "Since 1947," he writes, "one-half of the nation's families and unattached individuals have had an income too small to provide them with a maintenance standard of living," which he sets at \$4,500 a year for a family. He does give a table, with a long supporting footnote that failed to make clear to me how he could have possibly decided that 90,000,000 Americans are now living on less than \$4,500 a year; I suspect some confusion between a "maintenance" and a "minimum-comfort" budget.

More persuasive estimates appear in the Conference on Economic Progress pamphlet, "Poverty and Deprivation." Using the \$4,000 cutoff, the authors conclude that 38,000,000 persons are now living in poverty, which is slightly less than Mr. Harrington's lowest estimate. One reason may be that the pamphlet discriminates, as most studies don't, between "multiple-person families" and "unattached individuals," rating the latter as poor only if they have less than \$2,000 a year. But there is more to it than that, including a few things I don't feel competent to judge. Income statistics are never compiled on exactly the same bases and there are all kinds of refinements, which vary from one study to another. Thus the Commerce Department's April report estimates there are 17,500,000 families *and* "unattached individuals" with incomes of less than \$4,000. How many of the latter are there? "Poverty and Deprivation" puts the number of single persons with under \$2,000 at 4,000,000. Let us say that in the 17,500,000 under \$4,000 there are 6,500,000 single persons — the proportion of unattached individuals tends to go down as income rises. This homemade estimate gives us 11,000,000 families with incomes of under \$4,000. Figuring the average American family at three and a half persons — which it is — this makes 38,500,000 individuals

in families, or a grand total, if we add in the 4,000,000 "unattached individuals" with under \$2,000 a year, of 42,500,000 Americans now living in poverty, which is close to a fourth of the total population.

The reason Dr. Galbraith was able to see poverty as no longer "a massive affliction" is that he used a cutoff of \$1,000, which even in 1949, when it was adopted in a Congressional study, was probably too low (the C.I.O. argued for \$2,000) and in 1958, when "The Affluent Society" appeared, was simply fantastic.

The model postwar budgets drawn up in 1951 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to "maintain a level of adequate living" give a concrete idea of what poverty means in this country — or would mean if poor families lived within their income and spent it wisely, which they don't. Dr. Kolko summarizes the kind of living these budgets provide:

Three members of the family see a movie once every three weeks, and one member sees a movie once every two weeks. There is no telephone in the house, but the family makes three pay calls a week. They buy one book a year and write one letter a week.

The father buys one heavy wool suit every two years and a light wool suit every three years; the wife, one suit every ten years or one skirt every five years. Every three or four years, depending on the distance and time involved, the family takes a vacation outside their own city. In 1950, the family spent a total of \$80 to \$90 on all types of home furnishings, electrical appliances, and laundry equipment. . . . The family eats cheaper cuts of meat several times a week, but has more expensive cuts on holidays. The entire family consumes a total of two five-cent ice cream cones, one five-cent candy bar, two bottles of soda, and one bottle of beer a week. The family owes no money, but has no savings except for a small insurance policy.

One other item is included in the B.L.S. "maintenance" budget: a new car every twelve to eighteen years.

This is an ideal picture, drawn up by social workers, of how a poor family *should* spend its money. But the poor are much less provident — installment debts take up a lot of their cash, and only a statistician could expect an actual live woman, however poor, to buy new clothes at intervals of five or ten years. Also, one suspects that a lot more movies are seen and ice-cream cones and bottles of beer are consumed than in the Spartan ideal. But these necessary luxuries are had only at the cost of displacing other items — necessary necessities, so to speak — in the B.L.S. budget.

The Conference on Economic Progress's "Poverty and Deprivation" deals not only with the poor but also with another large section of the "underprivileged," which is an American euphemism almost as good as

"senior citizen;" namely, the 37,000,000 persons whose family income is between \$4,000 and \$5,999 and the 2,000,000 singles who have from \$2,000 to \$2,999. The authors define "deprivation" as "above poverty but short of minimum requirements for a modestly comfortable level of living." They claim that 77,000,000 Americans, or *almost half the population*, live in poverty or deprivation. One recalls the furor Roosevelt aroused with his "one-third of a nation — ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." But the political climate was different then.

The distinction between a family income of \$3,500 ("poverty") and \$4,500 ("deprivation") is not vivid to those who run things — the 31 per cent whose incomes are between \$7,500 and \$14,999 and the 7 per cent of the topmost top dogs, who get \$15,000 or more. These two minorities, sizable enough to feel they *are* the nation, have been as unaware of the continued existence of mass poverty as this reviewer was until he read Mr. Harrington's book. They are businessmen, congressmen, judges, government officials, politicians, lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists, editors, journalists, and administrators in colleges, churches, and foundations. Since their education, income, and social status are superior, they, if anybody, might be expected to accept responsibility for what the Constitution calls "the general welfare." They have not done so in the case of the poor. And they have a good excuse. It is becoming harder and harder simply to *see* the one-fourth of our fellow-citizens who live below the poverty line.

The poor are increasingly slipping out of the very experience and consciousness of the nation. [Mr. Harrington writes]. If the middle class never did like ugliness and poverty, it was at least aware of them. "Across the tracks" was not a very long way to go. . . . Now the American city has been transformed. The poor still inhabit the miserable housing in the central area, but they are increasingly isolated from contact with, or sight of, anybody else. . . . Living out in the suburbs, it is easy to assume that ours is, indeed, an affluent society. . . .

Clothes make the poor invisible too: America has the best-dressed poverty the world has ever known. . . . It is much easier in the United States to be decently dressed than it is to be decently housed, fed, or doctored. . . .

Many of the poor are the wrong age to be seen. A good number of them are sixty-five years of age or better; an even larger number are under eighteen. . . .

And finally, the poor are politically invisible. . . . They are without lobbies of their own; they put forward no legislative program. As a group, they are atomized. They have no face; they have no voice. . . . Only the social agencies have a really direct involvement with the other America, and they are without any great political power. . . .

Forty to fifty million people are becoming increasingly invisible.

These invisible people fall mostly into the following categories, some of them overlapping: poor farmers, who operate 40 per cent of the farms and get 7 per cent of the farm cash income; migratory farm workers; unskilled, unorganized workers in offices, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, laundries, and other service jobs; inhabitants of areas where poverty is either endemic ("peculiar to a people or district"), as in the rural South, or epidemic ("prevalent among a community at a special time and produced by some special causes"), as in West Virginia, where the special cause was the closing of coal mines and steel plants; Negroes and Puerto Ricans, who are a fourth of the total poor; the alcoholic derelicts in the big-city skid rows; the hillbillies from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Oklahoma who have migrated to Midwestern cities in search of better jobs. And, finally, almost half our "senior citizens."

The only pages in "Poverty and Deprivation" that can be read are the statistical tables. The rest is a jungle of inchoate data that seems deliberately to eschew, like other collective research projects, such human qualities as reason (the reader has to do most of the work of ordering the material) and feeling (if Mr. Harrington sometimes has too much, it is a venial sin compared to the bleakness of this prose). My hypothesis is that "Poverty and Deprivation" was composed on that TX-o "electronic brain" at M.I.T. This would account both for the vitality of the tables and for the deadness of the text.

And what shall one say about the University of Michigan's "Income and Welfare in the United States"? Even its *tables* are not readable. And its text makes "Poverty and Deprivation" look like the Federalist Papers. On the first page, the authors unloose a generalization of stupefying generality: "The United States has arrived at the point where poverty could be abolished easily and simply by a stroke of the pen. [Where have we heard *that* before?] To raise every individual and family in the nation now below a subsistence income to the subsistence level would cost about \$10 billion a year. This is less than 2 per cent of the gross national product. It is less than 10 per cent of tax revenues. [They mean, but forgot to say so, *federal* taxes, since if state and local taxes were added, the total would be much higher than \$100 billion.] It is about one-fifth of the cost of national defense." (They might have added that it is slightly more than three times the \$3 billion Americans spend on their dogs and cats and canaries every year.) This got big headlines in the press, as must have been expected: "'STROKE OF PEN' COULD ELIMINATE POVERTY IN U.S., 4 SCIENTISTS SAY." But the authors, having dropped the \$10 billion figure on the first page, never explain its meaning — is it a seedbed operation or a permanent dole? They are not clear even on how they arrived at it. At their own estimate of 35,000,000 poor,

\$10 billion would work out to slightly less than \$300 per person. This seems too little to abolish poverty "easily and simply by a stroke of the pen."

There are other vaguenesses: "A careful analysis of the characteristics of families whose incomes are inadequate reveals that they should earn considerably more than they do on the basis of their education and other characteristics. The multivariate analysis . . . indicates that heads of poor families should average \$2,204 in earnings. In fact heads of poor families earned an average of only \$932 in 1959." I have already confessed my inability to understand the multivariate analysis, but the compilers seem to be saying that according to the variables in their study (race, age, sex, education, physical disabilities, and locale), heads of poor families should now be making twice as much as they are. And why don't they? "The discrepancy may arise from psychological dependency, lack of motivation, lack of intelligence, and a variety of other factors that were not studied." One wonders why they were not studied — and what those "other factors" were, exactly. Also, whether such a discrepancy — the earnings the researchers expected to find were actually less than half those they *did* find — may not indicate some ghastly flaw in that "multivariate analysis." There is, of course, no suggestion in the book that Dr. Morgan and his team are in any way worried.

The most obvious citizens of the Other America are those whose skins are the wrong color. The folk slogans are realistic: "Last to be hired, first to be fired" and "If you're black, stay back." There has been some progress. In 1939, the non-white worker's wage averaged 41.4 per cent of the white worker's; by 1958 it had climbed to 58 per cent. A famous victory, but the non-whites still average only slightly more than half as much as the whites. Even this modest gain was due not to any Rooseveltian or Trumanian social reform but merely to the fact that for some years there was a war on and workers were in demand, whether black, white, or violet. By 1947, the non-whites had achieved most of their advance — to 54 per cent of white earnings, which means they have gained, in the last fifteen years, just 4 per cent.

The least obvious poverty affects our "senior citizens" — those over sixty-five. Mr. Harrington estimates that half of them — 8,000,000 — live in poverty, and he thinks they are even more atomized and politically helpless than the rest of the Other America. He estimates that one-fourth of the "unrelated individuals" among them, or a million persons, have less than \$580 a year, which is about what is allotted for *food alone* in the Department of Agriculture's minimum-subsistence budget. (The average American family now spends only 20 per cent of its income for food — an indication of the remarkable prosperity we are all enjoying, except for one-quarter of us.) One can imagine, or perhaps one can't, what it would be like to live on

\$580 a year, or \$11 a week. It is only fair to note that most of our senior citizens do better: The average per-capita income of those over sixty-five is now estimated to be slightly over \$20 a week. That is, about \$1,000 a year.

The aged poor have two sources of income besides their earnings or savings. One is contributions by relatives. A 1961 White House Conference Report put this at 10 per cent of income, which works out to \$8 a week for an income of \$4,000 — and the 8,000,000 aged poor all have less than that. The other is Social Security, whose benefits in 1959 averaged \$18 a week. Even this modest sum is more than any of the under-\$4,000 got, since payments are proportionate to earnings and the poor, of course, earned less than the rest. A quarter of them, and those in general the neediest, are not covered by Social Security. The last resort is relief, and Mr. Harrington describes most vividly the humiliations the poor often have to put up with to get that.

The problem of the aged poor is aggravated by the fact that, unlike the Italians or the English, we seem to have little respect for or interest in our "senior citizens," beyond giving them that honorific title, and we don't include them in family life. If we can afford it, we are likely to send them to nursing homes — "a storage-bin philosophy," a Senate report calls it — and if we can't, which is the case with the poor, they must make do with the resources noted above. The Michigan study has a depressing chapter on "The Economics of Living with Relatives." Nearly two-thirds of the heads of families queried were opposed to having their aged parents live with their children. "The old do not understand the young, and the young do not understand the old or the young," observed one respondent, who must have had a sense of humor. Other replies were "Old people are pretty hard to get along with" and "The parents and the children try to boss each other and when they live with you there's always fighting." The minority in favor gave practical reasons, like "It's a good thing to have them with you so you can see after them" and "The old folks might get a pension or something, so they could help you out." Hardly anyone expressed any particular respect for the old, or a feeling that their experience might enrich family life. The most depressing finding was "People most able to provide support for relatives are most opposed to it. Older people with some college education are eleven to one against it." The most favorable toward including older people in the home were Negroes, and even they were mostly against it.

The whole problem of poverty and the aged is especially serious today because Americans are living longer. In the first half of this century, life expectancy increased 17.6 years for men and 20.3 years for women. And between 1950 and 1960 the over-sixty-five group increased twice as fast as the population as a whole.

The worst part of being old and poor in this country is the loneliness. Mr. Harrington notes that we have not only racial ghettos but geriatric ones, in the cheap rooming-house districts of large cities. He gives one peculiarly disturbing statistic: "One-third of the aged in the United States, some 5,000,000 or more human beings, have no phone in their place of residence. They are literally cut off from the rest of America."

Ernest Hemingway's celebrated deflation of Scott Fitzgerald's romantic notion that the rich are "different" somehow — "Yes, they have money" — doesn't apply to the poor. They are different in more important ways than their lack of money, as Mr. Harrington demonstrates:

Emotional upset is one of the main forms of the vicious circle of impoverishment. The structure of the society is hostile to these people. The poor tend to become pessimistic and depressed; they seek immediate gratification instead of saving; they act out.

Once this mood, this unarticulated philosophy becomes a fact, society can change, the recession can end, and yet there is no motive for movement. The depression has become internalized. The middle class looks upon this process and sees "lazy" people who "just don't want to get ahead." People who are much too sensitive to demand of cripples that they run races ask of the poor that they get up and act just like everyone else in the society.

The poor are not like everyone else. . . . They think and feel differently; they look upon a different America than the middle class looks upon.

The poor are also different in a physical sense: they are much less healthy. According to "Poverty and Deprivation," the proportion of those "disabled or limited in their major activity by chronic ill health" rises sharply as income sinks. In reasonably well-off families (\$7,000 and up), 4.3 per cent are so disabled; in reasonably poor families (\$2,000 to \$3,999), the proportion doubles, to 8 per cent; and in unreasonably poor families (under \$2,000), it doubles again, to 16.5 per cent. An obvious cause, among others, for the very poor being four times as much disabled by "chronic ill health" as the well-to-do is that they have much less money to spend for medical care — in fact, almost nothing. This weighs with special heaviness on the aged poor. During the fifties, Mr. Harrington notes, "all costs on the Consumer Price Index went up by 12 per cent. But medical costs, that terrible staple of the aged, went up by 36 per cent, hospitalization rose by 65 per cent, and group hospitalization costs (Blue Cross premiums) were up by 83 per cent."

This last figure is particularly interesting, since Blue Cross and such plans are the A.M.A.'s alternative to socialized medicine, or, rather, to the timid fumbings toward it that even our most liberal politicians have dared to pro-

pose. Such figures throw an unpleasant light on the Senate's rejection of Medicare. The defeat was all the more bitter because, in the usual effort to appease the conservatives (with the usual lack of success — only five Republicans and only four Southern Democrats voted pro), the bill was watered down in advance. Not until he had spent \$90 of his own money — which is 10 per cent of the annual income of some 3,000,000 aged poor — would a patient have been eligible. And the original program included only people already covered by Social Security or Railroad Retirement pensions and excluded the neediest of all — the 2,500,000 aged poor who are left out of both these systems. These untouchables were finally included in order to placate five liberal Republican senators, led by Javits of New York. They did vote for Medicare, but they were the only Republicans who did.

Mental as well as physical illness is much greater among the poor, even though our complacent cliché is that nervous breakdowns are a prerogative of the rich because the poor "can't afford" them. (They can't, but they have them anyway.) This bit of middle-class folklore should be laid to rest by a study made in New Haven: "Social Class and Mental Illness," by August B. Hollingshead and Frederick C. Redlich (Wiley). They found that the rate of "treated psychiatric illness" is about the same from the rich down through decently paid workers — an average of 573 per 100,000. But in the bottom fifth it shoots up to 1,659 per 100,000. There is an even more striking difference in the *kind* of mental illness. Of those in the four top income groups who had undergone psychiatric treatment, 65 per cent had been treated for neurotic problems and 35 per cent for psychotic disturbances. In the bottom fifth, the treated illnesses were almost all psychotic (90 per cent). This shows there is something to the notion that the poor "can't afford" nervous breakdowns — the milder kind, that is — since the reason the proportion of *treated* neuroses among the poor is only 10 per cent is that a neurotic can keep going, after a fashion. But the argument cuts deeper the other way. The poor go to a psychiatrist (or, more commonly, are committed to a mental institution) only when they are completely unable to function because of psychotic symptoms. Therefore, even that nearly threefold increase in mental disorders among the poor is probably an underestimate.

The poor are different, then, both physically and psychologically. During the fifties, a team of psychiatrists from Cornell studied "Midtown," a residential area in this city that contained 170,000 people, of all social classes. The area was 99 per cent white, so the findings may be presumed to understate the problem of poverty. The description of the poor — the "low social economic status individual" — is blunt: "[They are] rigid, suspicious, and have a fatalistic outlook on life. They do not plan ahead. . . . They are

prone to depression, have feelings of futility, lack of belongingness, friendliness, and a lack of trust in others." Only a Dr. Pangloss would expect anything else. As Mr. Harrington points out, such characteristics are "a realistic adaptation to a socially perverse situation."

As for the isolation that is the lot of the American poor, that is a point on which Mr. Harrington is very good:

America has a self-image of itself as a nation of joiners and doers. There are social clubs, charities, community drives, and the like. [One might add organizations like the Elks and Masons, Rotary and Kiwanis, cultural groups like our women's clubs, also alumni associations and professional organizations.] And yet this entire structure is a phenomenon of the middle class. Some time ago, a study in Franklin, Indiana [this vagueness of reference is all too typical of "The Other America"], reported that the percentage of people in the bottom class who were without affiliations of any kind was eight times as great as the percentage in the high-income class.

Paradoxically, one of the factors that intensifies the social isolation of the poor is that America thinks of itself as a nation without social classes. As a result, there are few social or civic organizations that are separated on the basis of income and class. The "working-class culture" that sociologists have described in a country like England does not exist here. . . . The poor person who might want to join an organization is afraid. Because he or she will have less education, less money, less competence to articulate ideas than anyone else in the group, they stay away.

One reason our society is a comparatively violent one is that the French and Italian and British poor have a communal life and culture that the American poor lack. As one reads "The Other America," one wonders why there is not even more violence than there is.

The richest city of all, New York, has been steadily growing poorer, if one looks beyond Park Avenue and Wall Street. Of its 2,080,000 families, just under half (49 per cent) had incomes in 1959 of less than \$6,000; for the city's non-white families, the percentage was 71. And a fourth of all New York families in 1959 were below the poverty line of \$4,000. These percentages are at present slightly higher than the national average — an ominous reversal of the city's earlier position. In 1932, the average national weekly wage was only 67 per cent of the New York City average. In 1960, it was 108 per cent. The city's manufacturing workers in 1946 earned \$11 more a week than the national average; in 1960 they earned \$6.55 a week less. The two chief reasons are probably the postwar influx of Puerto Ricans and the exodus to the suburbs of the well-to-do. But whatever the reasons, the city seems to be turning into an economically backward area, like Arkansas or New Hampshire. Even the bankers — the "non-supervisory" ones, that is

— are modestly paid: 54 per cent of the males and 78 per cent of the females make less than \$80 a week. All these statistics come from John O'Rourke, president of Joint Council 16, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which has 168,000 members in the area. Mr. O'Rourke has been campaigning to persuade Mayor Wagner to raise the city's minimum hourly wage to \$1.50. (The Mayor has gone as far as \$1.25.) The New York teamsters are motivated by enlightened self-interest: the more other wages stagnate, the harder it will be to maintain their own comparatively high level of pay. They complain especially about the low wages in the highly organized garment trade, to which Mr. Dubinsky's International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union replies that if it presses for higher wages the manufacturers will simply move to low-wage, non-union areas, mostly in the South, as the New England textile manufacturers did many years ago — a riposte that is as realistic as it is uncheering. However, Mr. O'Rourke has an enterprising research staff, plenty of persistence, and a sharp tongue. "New Yorkers," he says, "are accustomed to thinking of themselves as pacesetters in an allegedly affluent society [but] at the rate we are going, we will soon qualify for the title 'Sweatshop Capital of the Nation.'"

The main reason the American poor have become invisible is that since 1936 their numbers have been reduced by two-thirds. Astounding as it may seem, the fact is that President Roosevelt's "one-third of a nation" was a considerable understatement; over two-thirds of us then lived below the poverty line, as is shown by the tables that follow. But today the poor are a minority, and minorities can be ignored if they are so heterogeneous that they cannot be organized. When the poor were a majority, they simply could not be overlooked. Poverty is also hard to see today because the middle class (\$6,000 to \$14,999) has vastly increased — from 13 per cent of all families in 1936 to a near-majority (47 per cent) today. That mass poverty can persist despite this rise to affluence is hard to believe, or see, especially if one is among those who have risen.

Two tables in "Poverty and Deprivation" summarize what has been happening in the last thirty years. They cover only multiple-person families; all figures are converted to 1960 dollars; and the income is before taxes. I have omitted, for clarity, all fractions.

The first table is the percentage of families with a given income:

	1935-6	1947	1953	1960
Under \$ 4,000	68%	37%	28%	23%
\$4,000 to \$ 5,999	17	29	28	23
\$6,000 to \$ 7,499	6	12	17	16
\$7,500 to \$14,999	7	17	23	31
Over \$15,000	2	4	5	7

The second table is the share each group had in the family income of the nation:

	1935-6	1947	1953	1960
Under \$ 4,000	35%	16%	11%	7%
\$4,000 to \$ 5,999	21	24	21	15
\$6,000 to \$ 7,499	10	14	17	14
\$7,500 to \$14,999	16	28	33	40
Over \$15,000	18	18	19	24

Several interesting conclusions can be drawn from these tables:

(1) The New Deal didn't do anything about poverty: The under-\$4,000 families in 1936 were 68 per cent of the total population, which was slightly more than the 1929 figure of 65 per cent.

(2) The war economy (hot and cold) did do something about poverty: Between 1936 and 1960 the proportion of all families who were poor was reduced from 68 per cent to 23 per cent.

(3) If the percentage of under-\$4,000 families decreased by two-thirds between 1936 and 1960, their share of the national income dropped a great deal more — from 35 per cent to 7 per cent.

(4) The well-to-do (\$7,500 to \$14,999) have enormously increased, from 7 per cent of all families in 1936 to 31 per cent today. The rich (\$15,000 and over) have also multiplied — from 2 to 7 per cent. But it should be noted that the very rich, according to another new study, "The Share of Top Wealth-Holders in National Wealth, 1922-1956," by Robert J. Lampman (Princeton), have experienced a decline. He finds that the top 1 per cent of wealth-holders owned 38 per cent of the national wealth in 1929 and own only 28 per cent today. (Though let's not get sentimental over that "only.") Thus, *pace* Dr. Kolko, there has in fact been a redistribution of wealth — in favor of the well-to-do and the rich at the expense of the poor and the very rich.

(5) The reduction of poverty has slowed down. In the six years 1947-53, the number of poor families declined 9 per cent, but in the following seven years only 5 per cent. The economic stasis that set in with Eisenhower and that still persists under Kennedy was responsible. (This stagnation, however, did not affect the over-\$7,500 families, who increased from 28 per cent to 38 per cent between 1953 and 1960.) In the *New York Times Magazine* for last November 11th, Herman P. Miller, of the Bureau of the Census, wrote, "During the forties, the lower-paid occupations made the greatest relative gains in average income. Laborers and service workers . . . had increases of about 180% . . . and professional and managerial workers, the highest paid workers of all, had the lowest relative gains — 96%." But in the

last decade the trend has been reversed; laborers and service workers have gained 39% while professional-managerial workers have gained 68%. This is because in the wartime forties the unskilled were in great demand, while now they are being replaced by machines. Automation is today the same kind of menace to the unskilled — that is, the poor — that the enclosure movement was to the British agricultural population centuries ago. “The facts show that our ‘social revolution’ ended nearly twenty years ago,” Mr. Miller concludes, “yet important segments of the American public, many of them highly placed Government officials and prominent educators, think and act as though it were a continuing process.”

“A reduction of about 19% [in the under-\$6,000 families] in more than thirty years, or at a rate of about 0.7% per year, is no ground for complacency,” the authors of “Poverty and Deprivation” justly observe. There is even less ground for complacency in the recent figures on *extreme* poverty. The authors estimate the number of families in 1929 with incomes of under \$2,000 (in current dollars) at 7,500,000. By 1947 there were less than 4,000,000, not because of any philanthropic effort by their more prosperous fellow-citizens but entirely because of those first glorious years of a war economy. Six years later, in 1953, when the economy had begun to slow down, there were still 3,300,000 of these families with incomes of less than \$2,000, and seven years later, in 1960, “there had been no further reduction.” Thus in the last fifteen years the bottom dogs have remained on the bottom, sharing hardly at all in the advances that the income groups above them have made in an ascending scale that is exquisitely adjusted, by the automatic workings of capitalism, so that it is inversely proportionate to need.

There are, finally, the bottomest bottom dogs; i.e., *families* with incomes of *under* \$1,000. I apologize for the italics, but some facts insist on them. According to “Poverty and Deprivation,” the numbers of these families “appear to have risen slightly” of late (1953–60), from 800,000 to about 1,000,000. It is only fair, and patriotic, to add that according to the Commerce Department study, about 10,000,000 of our families and unattached individuals now enjoy incomes of \$10,000 a year and up. So while some 3,500,000 Americans are in under-\$1,000 families, ten times as many are in over-\$10,000 families. Not bad at all — in a way.

The post-1940 decrease in poverty was not due to the policies or actions of those who are not poor, those in positions of power and responsibility. The war economy needed workers, wages went up, and the poor became less poor. When economic stasis set in, the rate of decrease in poverty slowed down proportionately, and it is still slow. Kennedy’s efforts to “get the country moving again” have been unsuccessful, possibly because he has, despite

the suggestions of many of his economic advisers, not yet advocated the one big step that might push the economy off dead center: a massive increase in government spending. This would be politically courageous, perhaps even dangerous, because of the superstitious fear of "deficit spending" and an "unbalanced" federal budget. American folklore insists that a government's budget must be arranged like a private family's. Walter Lippmann wrote, after the collapse of the stock market last spring:

There is mounting evidence that those economists were right who told the Administration last winter that it was making the mistake of trying to balance the budget too soon. It will be said that the budget is not balanced: it shows a deficit in fiscal 1962 of \$7 billion. . . . But . . . the budget that matters is the Department of Commerce's income and product accounts budget. Nobody looks at it except the economists [but] while the Administrative budget is necessary for administration and is like a man's checkbook, the income budget tells the real story. . . .

[It] shows that at the end of 1962 the outgo and ingo accounts will be virtually in balance, with a deficit of only about half a billion dollars. Thus, in reality, the Kennedy administration is no longer stimulating the economy, and the economy is stagnating for lack of stimulation. We have one of the lowest rates of growth among the advanced industrial nations of the world.

One shouldn't be hard on the President. Franklin Roosevelt, a more daring and experimental politician, at least in his domestic policy, listened to the American disciples of J. M. Keynes in the early New Deal years and unbalanced his budgets, with splendid results. But by 1936 he had lost his nerve. He cut back government spending and there ensued the 1937 recession, from which the economy recovered only when war orders began to make up for the deficiency in domestic buying power. "Poverty and Deprivation" estimates that between 1953 and 1961 the annual growth rate of our economy was "only 2.5 per cent per annum contrasted with an estimated 4.2 per cent required to maintain utilization of manpower and other productive resources." The poor, who always experience the worst the first, understand quite personally the meaning of that dry statistic, as they understand Kipling's "The toad beneath the harrow knows / Exactly where each tooth-point goes." They are also most intimately acquainted with another set of statistics: the steady postwar rise in the unemployment rate, from 3.1 per cent in 1949 to 4.3 per cent in 1954 to 5.1 per cent in 1958 to over 7 per cent in 1961. (The Tory Government is worried because British unemployment is now at its highest point for the last three years. This point is 2.1 per cent, which is less than our lowest rate in the last fifteen years.)

Some of the post-1940 gains of the poor have been their own doing. "Moonlighting" — or holding two or more jobs at once — was practiced by about 3 per cent of the employed in 1950; today this percentage has almost doubled. Far more important is what might be called "wife-flitting": Between 1940 and 1957, the percentage of wives with jobs outside the home doubled, from 15 per cent to 30 per cent. The head of the United States Children's Bureau, Mrs. Katherine B. Oettinger, announced last summer, not at all triumphantly, that there are now two-thirds more working mothers than there were ten years ago and that these mothers have about 15,000,000 children under eighteen — of whom 4,000,000 are under six. This kind of economic enterprise ought to impress Senator Goldwater and the ideologues of the *National Review*, whose reaction to the poor, when they think about such an uninspiring subject, is "Why don't they *do* something about it?" The poor have done something about it and the family pay check is bigger and the statistics on poverty look better. But the effects on family life and on those 4,000,000 pre-school children is something else. Mrs. Oettinger quoted a roadside sign, "IRONING, DAY CARE AND WORMS FOR FISHING BAIT," and mentioned a baby-sitter who pacified her charge with sleeping pills and another who met the problem of a cold apartment by putting the baby in the oven. "The situation has become a 'national disgrace,' with many unfortunate conditions that do not come to public attention until a crisis arises," the *Times* summed up her conclusion. This crisis has finally penetrated to public attention. The President recently signed a law that might be called Day-care. It provides \$5,000,000 for such facilities this fiscal year, which works out to \$1.25 for each of the 4,000,000 under-six children with working mothers. Next year, the program will provide all of \$2.50 per child. This is a free, democratic society's notion of an adequate response. Almost a century ago, Bismarck instituted in Germany state-financed social benefits far beyond anything we have yet ventured. Granted that he did it merely to take the play away from the Social Democratic Party founded by Marx and Engels. Still, one imagines that Count Bismarck must be amused — in the circle of Hell reserved for reactionaries — by that \$2.50 a child.

It's not that Public Opinion doesn't become Aroused every now and then. But the arousal never leads to much. It was aroused twenty-four years ago when John Steinbeck published "The Grapes of Wrath," but Mr. Harrington reports that things in the Imperial Valley are still much the same: low wages, bad housing, no effective union. Public Opinion is too public — that is, too general; of its very nature, it can have no sustained interest in California agriculture. The only groups with such a continuing interest are the workers and the farmers who hire them. Once Public Opinion ceased to be Aroused, the battle was again between the two antagonists with a real,

personal stake in the outcome, and there was no question about which was stronger. So with the rural poor in general. In the late fifties, the average annual wage for white male American farm workers was slightly over \$1,000; women, children, Negroes, and Mexicans got less. One recalls Edward R. Murrow's celebrated television program about these people, "Harvest of Shame." Once more everybody was shocked, but the harvest is still shameful. One also recalls that Mr. Murrow, after President Kennedy had appointed him head of the United States Information Agency, tried to persuade the B.B.C. not to show "Harvest of Shame." His argument was that it would give an undesirable "image" of America to foreign audiences.

There is a monotony about the injustices suffered by the poor that perhaps accounts for the lack of interest the rest of society shows in them. Everything seems to go wrong with them. They never win. It's just boring.

Public housing turns out not to be for them. The 1949 Housing Act authorized 810,000 new units of low-cost housing in the following four years. Twelve years later, in 1961, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. proposed 400,000 units to complete the lagging 1949 program. The Kennedy administration ventured to recommend 100,000 to Congress. Thus, instead of 810,000 low-cost units by 1953, the poor will get, if they are lucky, 500,000 by 1963. And they are more likely to be injured than helped by slum clearance, since the new projects usually have higher rents than the displaced slum-dwellers can afford. (There has been no dearth of government-financed *middle-income* housing since 1949.) These refugees from the bulldozers for the most part simply emigrate to other slums. They also become invisible; Mr. Harrington notes that half of them are recorded as "address unknown." Several years ago, Charles Abrams, who was New York State Rent Administrator under Harri-man and who is now president of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, summed up what he had learned in two decades in public housing: "Once social reforms have won tonal appeal in the public mind, their slogans and goal-symbols may degenerate into tools of the dominant class for beleaguering the minority and often for defeating the very aims which the original sponsors had intended for their reforms." Mr. Abrams was probably thinking, in part, of the Title I adventures of Robert Moses in dealing with New York housing. There is a Moses or two in every American city, determined to lead us away from the promised land.

And this is not the end of tribulation. The poor, who can least afford to lose pay because of ill health, lose the most. A National Health Survey, made a few years ago, found that workers earning under \$2,000 a year had twice as many "restricted-activity days" as those earning over \$4,000.

The poor are even fatter than the rich. (The cartoonists will have to revise their clichés.) "Obesity is seven times more frequent among women of

the lowest socio-economic level than it is among those of the highest level," state Drs. Moore, Stunkard, and Srole in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. (The proportion is almost the same for men.) They also found that overweight associated with poverty is related to mental disease. Fatness used to be a sign of wealth, as it still is in some parts of Africa, but in more advanced societies it is now a stigma of poverty, since it means too many cheap carbohydrates and too little exercise — which has changed from a necessity for the poor into a luxury for the rich, as may be confirmed by a glance at the models in any fashion magazine.

Although they are the most in need of hospital insurance, the poor have the least, since they can't afford the premiums; only 40 per cent of poor families have it, as against 63 per cent of all families. (It should be noted, however, that the poor who are war veterans can get free treatment, at government expense, in Veterans Administration Hospitals.)

The poor actually pay more taxes, in proportion to their income, than the rich. A recent study by the Tax Foundation estimates that 28 per cent of incomes under \$2,000 goes for taxes, as against 24 per cent of the incomes of families earning five to seven times as much. Sales and other excise taxes are largely responsible for this curious statistic. It is true that such taxes fall impartially on all, like the blessed rain from heaven, but it is a form of egalitarianism that perhaps only Senator Goldwater can fully appreciate.

The final irony is that the Welfare State, which Roosevelt erected and which Eisenhower, no matter how strongly he felt about it, didn't attempt to pull down, is not for the poor, either. Agricultural workers are not covered by Social Security, nor are many of the desperately poor among the aged, such as "unrelated individuals" with incomes of less than \$1,000, of whom only 37 per cent are covered, which is just half the percentage of coverage among the aged in general. Of the Welfare State, Mr. Harrington says, "Its creation had been stimulated by mass impoverishment and misery, yet it helped the poor least of all. Laws like unemployment compensation, the Wagner Act, the various farm programs, all these were designed for the middle third in the cities, for the organized workers, and for the . . . big market farmers. . . . [It] benefits those least who need help most." The industrial workers, led by John L. Lewis, mobilized enough political force to put through Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act, which, with the Wagner Act, made the C.I.O. possible. The big farmers put enough pressure on Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's first Secretary of Agriculture — who talked a good fight for liberal principles but was a Hamlet when it came to action — to establish the two basic propositions of Welfare State agriculture: subsidies that now cost \$3 billion a year and that chiefly benefit the big farmers; and the exclusion of sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and mi-

gratory workers from the protection of minimum-wage and Social Security laws.

No doubt the Kennedy administration would like to do more for the poor than it has, but it is hampered by the cabal of Republicans and Southern Democrats in Congress. The 1961 revision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which raised the national minimum wage to the not exorbitant figure of \$1.15 an hour, was a slight improvement over the previous act. For instance, it increased coverage of retail-trade workers from 3 per cent to 33 per cent. (But one-fourth of the retail workers still excluded earn less than \$1 an hour.) There was also a considerable amount of shadowboxing involved: Of the 3,600,000 workers newly covered, only 663,000 were making less than \$1 an hour. And there was the exclusion of a particularly ill-paid group of workers. Nobody had anything against the laundry workers *personally*. It was just that they were weak, unorganized, and politically expendable. To appease the conservatives in Congress, whose votes were needed to get the revision through, they were therefore expended. The result is that of the 500,000 workers in the laundry, dry-cleaning, and dyeing industries, just 17,000 are now protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

In short, one reaches the unstartling conclusion that rewards in class societies, including Communist ones, are according to power rather than need. A recent illustration is the campaign of an obscure organization called Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A. to get a bill through Congress for pensions of about \$25 a week. It was formed by older men who think other veterans' organizations (such as the American Legion, which claims 2,500,000 members to their 200,000) are dominated by the relatively young. It asks for pensions for veterans of the First World War with incomes of under \$2,400 (if single) or \$3,600 (if married) — that is, only for *poor* veterans. The editorials have been violent: "STOP THIS VETERANS' GRAB," implored the *Herald Tribune*; "WORLD WAR I PENSION GRAB," echoed the *Saturday Evening Post*. Their objection was, in part, that many of the beneficiaries would not be bonafide poor, since pensions, annuities, and Social Security benefits were excluded from the maximum income needed to qualify. Considering that the average Social Security payment is about \$1,000 a year, this would not put any potential beneficiary into the rich or even the comfortably-off class, even if one assumes another \$1,000, which is surely too high, from annuities and pensions. It's all very confusing. The one clear aspect is that the minuscule Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A. came very near to bringing it off. Although their bill was opposed by both the White House and by the chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, two hundred and one members of the House signed a petition to bring the measure to a vote, only eighteen less than needed "to accomplish

this unusual parliamentary strategy," as the *Times* put it. These congressmen were motivated by politics rather than charity, one may assume. Many were up for reelection last November, and the two hundred thousand Veterans of World War I had two advantages over the fifty million poor: They were organized, and they had a patriotic appeal only a wink away from the demagogic. Their "unusual parliamentary strategy" failed by eighteen votes in the Congress. But there will be another Congress.

It seems likely that mass poverty will continue in this country for a long time. The more it is reduced, the harder it is to keep on reducing it. The poor, having dwindled from two-thirds of the population in 1936 to one-quarter today, no longer are a significant political force, as is shown by the Senate's rejection of Medicare and by the Democrats' dropping it as an issue in the elections last year. Also, as poverty decreases, those left behind tend more and more to be the ones who have for so long accepted poverty as their destiny that they need outside help to climb out of it. This new minority mass poverty, so much more isolated and hopeless than the old majority poverty, shows signs of becoming chronic. "The permanence of low incomes is inferred from a variety of findings," write the authors of the Michigan survey. "In many poor families the head has never earned enough to cover the family's present needs." They give a vignette of what the statistics mean in human terms:

For most families, however, the problem of chronic poverty is serious. One such family is headed by a thirty-two-year-old man who is employed as a dishwasher. Though he works steadily and more than full time, he earned slightly over \$2,000 in 1959. His wife earned \$300 more, but their combined incomes are not enough to support themselves and their three children. Although the head of the family is only thirty-two, he feels that he has no chance of advancement partly because he finished only seven grades of school. . . . The possibility of such families leaving the ranks of the poor is not high.

Children born into poor families today have less chance of "improving themselves" than the children of the pre-1940 poor. Rags to riches is now more likely to be rags to rags. "Indeed," the Michigan surveyors conclude, "it appears that a number of the heads of poor families have moved into less skilled jobs than their fathers had." Over a third of the children of the poor, according to the survey, don't go beyond the eighth grade and "will probably perpetuate the poverty of their parents." There are a great many of these children. In an important study of poverty, made for a Congressional committee in 1959, Dr. Robert J. Lampman estimated that eleven million of the poor were under eighteen. "A considerable number of younger persons are starting life in a condition of 'inherited poverty,'" he observed. To

which Mr. Harrington adds, "The character of poverty has changed, and it has become more deadly for the young. It is no longer associated with immigrant groups with high aspirations; it is now identified with those whose social existence makes it more and more difficult to break out into the larger society." Even when children from poor families show intellectual promise, there is nothing in the values of their friends or families to encourage them to make use of it. Dr. Kolko, citing impressive sources, states that of the top 16 per cent of high-school students — those scoring 120 and over in I.Q. tests — only half go on to college. The explanation for this amazing — and alarming — situation is as much cultural as economic. The children of the poor now tend to lack what the sociologists call "motivation." At least one foundation is working on the problem of why so many bright children from poor families don't ever try to go beyond high school.

Mr. Raymond M. Hilliard, at present director of the Cook County (i.e., Chicago) Department of Public Aid and formerly Commissioner of Welfare for New York City, recently directed a "representative-sample" investigation, which showed that more than half of the 225,000 able-bodied Cook County residents who were on relief were "functionally illiterate." One reason Cook County has to spend \$16,500,000 a month on relief is "the lack of basic educational skills of relief recipients which are essential to compete in our modern society." An interesting footnote, apropos of recent happenings at "Ole Miss," is that the illiteracy rate of the relief recipients who were educated in Chicago is 33 per cent, while among those who were educated in Mississippi and later moved to Chicago it is 77 per cent.

The problem of educating the poor has changed since 1900. Then it was the language and cultural difficulties of immigrants from foreign countries; now it is the subtler but more intractable problems of internal migration from backward regions, mostly in the South. The old immigrants wanted to Better Themselves and to Get Ahead. The new migrants are less ambitious, and they come into a less ambitious atmosphere. "When they arrive in the city," wrote Christopher Jencks in an excellent two-part survey, "Slums and Schools," in the *New Republic* last fall, "they join others equally unprepared for urban life in the slums — a milieu which is in many ways utterly dissociated from the rest of America. Often this milieu is self-perpetuating. I have been unable to find any statistics on how many of these migrants' children and grandchildren have become middle-class, but it is probably not too inaccurate to estimate that about 30,000,000 people live in urban slums, and that about half are second-generation residents." The immigrants of 1890-1910 also arrived in a milieu that was "in many ways utterly dissociated from the rest of America," yet they had a vision — a rather materialistic one, but still a vision — of what life in America could be if they worked

hard enough; and they did work, and they did aspire to something more than they had; and they did get out of the slums. The disturbing thing about the poor today is that so many of them seem to lack any such vision. Mr. Jencks remarks:

While the economy is changing in a way which makes the eventual liquidation of the slums at least conceivable, young people are not seizing the opportunities this change presents. Too many are dropping out of school before graduation (more than half in many slums); too few are going to college. . . . As a result there are serious shortages of teachers, nurses, doctors, technicians, and scientifically trained executives, but 4,500,000 unemployables.

"Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime," Aristotle wrote. This is now a half truth — the last half. Our poor are alienated; they don't consider themselves part of society. But precisely because they don't they are not politically dangerous. It is people with "a stake in the country" who make revolutions. The best — though by no means the only — reason for worrying about the Other America is that its existence should make us feel uncomfortable.

The federal government is the only purposeful force — I assume wars are not purposeful — that can reduce the numbers of the poor and make their lives more bearable. The authors of "Poverty and Deprivation" take a dim view of the Kennedy administration's efforts to date:

The Federal Budget is the most important single instrument available to us as a free people to induce satisfactory economic performance, and to reduce poverty and deprivation. . . .

Projected Federal outlays in the fiscal 1963 Budget are too small. The items in this Budget covering programs directly related to human improvement and the reduction of mass poverty and deprivation allocate far too small a portion of our total national production to these great purposes.

The effect of government policy on poverty has two quite distinct aspects. One is the indirect effect of the stimulation of the economy by federal spending. Such stimulation — though by war-time demands rather than government policy — has in the past produced a prosperity that did cut down American poverty by almost two-thirds. But I am inclined to agree with Dr. Galbraith that it would not have a comparable effect on present-day poverty:

It is assumed that with increasing output poverty must disappear [he writes]. Increased output eliminated the general poverty of all who worked. Accordingly it must, sooner or later, eliminate the special poverty that still remains. . . . Yet just as the arithmetic of modern poli-

tics makes it tempting to overlook the very poor, so the supposition that increasing output will remedy their case has made it easy to do so too.

He underestimates the massiveness of American poverty, but he is right when he says there is now a hard core of the specially disadvantaged — because of age, race, environment, physical or mental defects, etc. — that would not be significantly reduced by general prosperity. (Although I think the majority of our present poor *would* benefit, if only by a reduction in the present high rate of unemployment.)

To do something about this hard core, a second line of government policy would be required; namely, direct intervention to help the poor. We have had this since the New Deal, but it has always been grudging and miserly, and we have never accepted the principle that every citizen should be provided, at state expense, with a reasonable minimum standard of living regardless of any other considerations. It should not depend on earnings, as does Social Security, which continues the inequalities and inequities and so tends to keep the poor forever poor. Nor should it exclude millions of our poorest citizens because they lack the political pressure to force their way into the Welfare State. The governmental obligation to provide, out of taxes, such a minimum living standard for all who need it should be taken as much for granted as free public schools have always been in our history.

It may be objected that the economy cannot bear the cost, and certainly costs must be calculated. But the point is not the calculation but the principle. Statistics — and especially statistical forecasts — can be pushed one way or the other. Who can determine in advance to what extent the extra expense of giving our 40,000,000 poor enough income to rise above the poverty line would be offset by the lift to the economy from their increased purchasing power? We really don't know. Nor did we know what the budgetary effects would be when we established the principle of free public education. The rationale then was that all citizens should have an equal chance of competing for a better status. The rationale now is different: that every citizen has a right to become or remain part of our society because if this right is denied, as it is in the case of at least one-fourth of our citizens, it impoverishes us all. Since 1932, "the government" — local, state, and federal — has recognized a responsibility to provide its citizens with a subsistence living. Apples will never again be sold on the street by jobless accountants, it seems safe to predict, nor will any serious political leader ever again suggest that share-the-work and local charity can solve the problem of unemployment. "Nobody starves" in this country any more, but, like every social statistic, this is a tricky business. Nobody starves, but who can measure the starvation, not to be calculated by daily intake of proteins and calories,

that reduces life for many of our poor to a long vestibule to death? Nobody starves, but every fourth citizen rubs along on a standard of living that is below what Mr. Harrington defines as "the minimal levels of health, housing, food, and education that our present stage of scientific knowledge specifies as necessary for life as it is now lived in the United States." Nobody starves, but a fourth of us are excluded from the common social existence. Not to be able to afford a movie or a glass of beer is a kind of starvation — if everybody else can.

The problem is obvious: the persistence of mass poverty in a prosperous country. The solution is also obvious: to provide, out of taxes, the kind of subsidies that have always been given to the public schools (not to mention the police and fire departments and the post office). — subsidies that would raise incomes above the poverty level, so that every citizen could feel he is indeed such. "*Civis Romanus sum!*" cried St. Paul when he was threatened with flogging — and he was not flogged. Until our poor can be proud to say "*Civis Americanus sum!*," until the act of justice that would make this possible has been performed by the three-quarters of Americans who are not poor — until then the shame of the Other America will continue.

RECENT AMERICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY: AN ANALYSIS

Some years ago the literary critic and historian Alfred Kazin argued that very few American historians “. . . have a real point of view. The amorphous liberalism of so many intellectuals works with particularly numbing force on historians who are so full of American history (i.e., *modern* history) that they are too much a part of what they are writing about to describe it with required force and edge and interest. American historians are deficient in ideas. Whether their lack of perspective is due to their lack of general historical interests or whether it is the other way around, they need a gimmick, a tool, a formula.” If this lack were indeed behind the current trend of much of American historical writing, the condition would be serious. In the concluding article in this volume, Professor John Higham of the University of Michigan does not go quite that far; he sees and appreciates much of what is healthy and vital about recent historical writing, but he does view it in the main as a reflection of the general conservative tenor of our age.

Higham's article in itself is evidence that all American historians have not succumbed to the hypnotic attraction of conservatism. His central point — that American history has not been one long, happy voyage in a homogeneous vessel with few differences and with a joyful consensus — is a point worth making. But in hammering this message home, Higham himself is frequently guilty of a bit of “homogenizing.” He too easily lumps the majority of modern historians together with Professor Daniel Boorstin, whose work he subjects to close analysis. It may well be that Boorstin's ideas are motivated by philosophical conservatism, but whether this is true of the other “homogenizers” (of whom Higham gives us only a few examples) is not quite so clear. It is clear that they are deeply influenced by the sociological and psychological ideas and theories that permeate our age. This influence has led them to ask questions concerning status, ideology, motivation, which historians in the past have too frequently ignored. It has led them also to overlook too easily the validity contained in the analyses of their predecessors. They have, at times, as Higham maintains, stood Beard, Turner, and Parrington on their heads; they have too frequently distorted the past a bit by leveling its hills and elevating its valleys, by seemingly reducing it all to one continuous plateau.

This kind of distortion, of course, is by no means unique. "Any written history," Charles Beard once argued, "inevitably reflects the thought of the author in his time and cultural setting." Beard himself is a good example. Nurtured in an age of reform, an age convinced of the potency of economic motivation, Beard saw the past partially through the spectacles of the present. But though his method was often faulty, his evidence often inadequate, his thesis often imperfect, though, in short, he often distorted the past, his contribution to our knowledge of ourselves and our history was immense and enduring. This is not to say that the historian is the prisoner of the present, but rather that he can and should learn from the present and apply that learning to his understanding of the past. To be true to his calling, the historian must attempt to rise above the present, but he can ignore it only at his peril. Historians, as Professor J. H. Hexter has noted, "use all the tracking devices available to them at the time. . . . And of course the adequacy of the historical search at any time is in some degree limited by the adequacy of the tracking devices." Viewed in this perspective, rather than in the ideological framework that Professor Higham employs, the strengths and weaknesses of recent historical works might become clearer.

It may be that the "tracking devices" of our period lead historians to examine consensus and continuity more closely than change, but this bias need not result in a conservative interpretation of the American past. It is possible to maintain that Democrats and Republicans, agrarians and urbanites, westerners and easterners, have shared a certain set of values without denying the real differences between them. But if these shared values have not eliminated meaningful conflict in America, they have been extremely influential in shaping the course and resolution of that conflict. One need not join Professor Boorstin in celebrating the existence of this consensus. Insofar as it has served to prevent the rise of a meaningful two-party system, to limit the resolution of the real conflicts that have taken place, to blind Americans to the needs of their society, and to inhibit them from solving their persistent problems, one may well deplore it, but to deplore it is not to deny its existence.

We can, in short, echo Professor Higham's plea for "An appreciation of the crusading spirit, a responsiveness to indignation, a sense of injustice," without forgetting that these values can go hand in hand with, and can even be enhanced by, a deeper understanding of the existence of a certain degree of continuity and consensus in American history.

*The Cult of the "American Consensus":
Homogenizing Our History*

JOHN HIGHAM

In retrospect, it is becoming apparent that the decade of the 1940's marked a fundamental change of direction in the exploration of the American past. At the time nothing very unusual seemed to be happening in the minds of American historians, in spite of the clamor in the world around them. The usual outpouring of conventional monographs continued. Our endless fascination with the pageant of the Civil War produced a new but not a very different crop of narratives. There was, to be sure, a rising volume of criticism of the giants who had dominated American historical scholarship in the period between the wars: Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles A. Beard, and Vernon L. Parrington. But the image they had fixed on the screen of the American past had only begun to dissolve. As late as 1950, when Henry Steele Commager's *The American Mind* carried our intellectual history down to date in the spirit of Parrington, the result sounded only a trifle old-fashioned.

In the last few years, however, the critical attacks of the 40's have matured into a full-scale reappraisal of the main themes in American history. The great trio of yester-year have gone into eclipse. Their vision of an America in which democracy, vaguely associated with the West, battled against entrenched economic privilege no longer seems basic enough to define the shape of our national development. On the whole, the distinctive interpretations of Turner, Beard, and Parrington no longer appear persuasive enough to evoke really lively controversy. They linger on, flattened and desiccated, in the pages of many a textbook, where they may occasionally inflame the Daughters of the American Revolution, the *Daily News*, and others who specialize in discovering the menace of dead issues. Meanwhile, our living historical awareness has moved so far from the interests of Turner, Beard, and Parrington that interpretive historians now feel less need to criticize or defend them than to supersede them.

Giants being notoriously oversized, no one has yet stepped into their shoes. The new books that are giving us an altered sense of who we are lack

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either the scale or the density or the architectural strength that history of the first order of importance must have. Still, some lively work is being done. Some important books that try to fit fragmentary research into a new pattern, plausible to contemporary sensibilities, are being written. The dominant image they project bears few resemblances to the turbulent picture that prevailed before the 1940's.

An earlier generation of historians, inspired by Turner, Beard, and Parrington and nurtured in a restless atmosphere of reform, had painted America in the bold hues of conflict. Sometimes their interpretations pitted class against class, sometimes section against section; and increasingly they aligned both sections and classes behind the banners of clashing ideologies. It was East vs. West, with the South gravitating from one to the other; farmers vs. businessmen, with urban workers in the pivotal position; city vs. country; property rights vs. human rights; Hamiltonianism vs. Jeffersonianism. These lines of cleavage were charted continuously from the Colonial period to the present. They gave a sense of depth to the social struggles which historians in the early 20th century observed all around them.

The divisions between periods loomed as large as those between groups. Among scholars attuned to conflict, American history appeared jagged and discontinuous. Historians like Beard had an eye for the convulsive moments in history, and they dramatized vividly the turning points when one side or the other seemed to seize control. To them, America had had several revolutions, usually triumphant over formidable resistance, and always big with unfulfilled promise. They saw the revolution of 1776 not simply as a war for independence but as a drastic redistribution of power within the Colonies. They called the Civil War the "Second American Revolution," and in between they acclaimed the "Revolution of 1800," when Jefferson came to power, and the militant rise of the common man behind Andrew Jackson. There was, of course, the Industrial Revolution, followed by the heroic Populist Revolt; and similar social conflicts throughout the Colonial period caught their attention.

With some lapse of consistency these connoisseurs of change often played down the newness of the New Deal. The closer they looked to the present, the more clearly they observed the traditional elements in a movement of protest. The issues of their own day, they knew, were anchored in a long heritage, the changes no more than might be expected; the transitions of the past looked much more radical. Over all, however, the crises of American history stood out as the milestones of progress, when men shed outworn beliefs and remade their institutions in response to the demands of a changed environment.

In contrast, the new look of American history is strikingly conservative.

More than at any time before, historians are discovering a placid, unexciting past. To an impressive degree, the dominant interpretations have recaptured the spirit of Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *Democracy in America* has emerged in recent years from a characteristic neglect during the early 20th century. As Tocqueville did more than a century ago, today's historians are exhibiting a happy land, adventurous in manner but conservative in substance, and — above all — remarkably homogeneous.

For one thing, current scholarship is carrying out a massive grading operation to smooth over America's social convulsions. The American Revolution has lost its revolutionary character, becoming again what genteel historians had always said it was: a reluctant resistance of sober Englishmen to infringements on English liberties. We have learned that the Jacksonians yearned nostalgically to restore the stable simplicity of a bygone age, and that the Populists were rural businessmen deluded by a similar pastoral mythology. Paradoxically, we have even grown conservative enough to recognize fairly radical changes in the recent past and so to probe, with Richard Hofstadter, for elements of social revolution in the New Deal. Hofstadter's very influential book, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (1955) neatly reverses the older views. It presents Populism in the 1890's and Progressivism in the early 20th century not as mighty upheavals but as archaic efforts to recapture the past. On the other hand, it shows the New Deal as an abrupt break with the past.

Among earlier crises, the Civil War alone has resisted somewhat the flattening process. Yet a significant decline has occurred in the number of important contributions to Civil War history from professional scholars. One is tempted to conclude that disturbances which cannot be minimized must be neglected. On the other hand, the growing attraction of the Civil War to journalists suggests that it provides a larger public with a kind of surrogate for all of the other dramatic moments that historians are deflating.

By reducing the importance of these turning points, the newer interpretations have enabled us to rediscover the continuity of American history, the stability of basic institutions, the toughness of the social fabric. The same result is also being attained by dissolving the persistent dualisms, which Parrington and Beard emphasized, and substituting a monistic pattern. Instead of two traditions or sections or classes deployed against one another all along the line of national development, we are told that America in the largest sense has had one unified culture. Classes have turned into myths, sections have lost their solidarity, ideologies have vaporized into climates of opinion. The phrase "*the American experience*" has become an incantation.

To fill in its meaning, historians have joined social scientists in a new fascination with the concept of national character. Since definitions of na-

tional character necessarily concern the pervasive, persistent features of a whole culture, progressive scholars distrusted them. Today, however, the study of national character brings out the unifying effects of forces that formerly impressed us as disruptive. Thus David Potter's *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (1954) advances an economic interpretation of our similarities instead of our differences. Whereas the generation of Parrington and Beard had explained basic cleavages on economic grounds, Potter shows our wealth shaping our common ways of life.

Of course, the new interpreters have to face a considerable amount of real strife at various times in the history of the nation. They must also recognize that many Americans at such times have *thought* their country cleft between "haves" and "have-nots." But an emphasis on the belief can help to minimize the reality. A psychological approach to conflict enables historians to substitute a schism in the soul for a schism in society. Certainly present-day scholars tend to subjectivize the stresses in American life. Divisions, which the previous generation understood as basic opposition between distinct groups, turn into generalized psychological tensions running through the society as a whole. John Dos Passos's bitter outburst in the 1930's — "all right we are two nations" — becomes the record of a state of mind. An able synthesis of recent research on the age of the great tycoons explains the popular outcries against them as a projection upon one group of responsibility for the rapid industrial changes into which all were thrown.¹

Accordingly, when historians today write critically, they scrupulously avoid singling out any one segment of the population for blame. They either criticize the myths and stereotypes that have exaggerated the differences between competing groups; or they attack our uniformities and hanker for more variety. Louis Hartz, in what was perhaps the most outstanding of the new interpretive books, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (1955), worried because we have no other tradition. A regime of freedom has had so unchallenged a sway in America, Hartz contended, that most American political debate has been shadow-boxing. "America must look to its contact with other nations to provide that spark of philosophy, that grain of relative insight that its own history has denied it."

Hartz's own sympathies lay with dissent and diversity. He was clearly disturbed by the soporific intellectual implications of the liberal consensus he described. To take full advantage of the new monolithic approach to American history would require a point of view much more complacent, much

¹ Samuel Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914* (1957).

less internationally oriented, and much less respectful of the value of ideas. About the time when Hartz was first publishing the early chapters of his book in scholarly journals, Daniel J. Boorstin was making a similar but more drastic revision of American history in a conservative direction. Boorstin wrote in a mood thoroughly in tune with the unphilosophic harmony which he and Hartz were independently appraising.

A slim volume of lectures published in 1953, *The Genius of American Politics*, stated the essence of Boorstin's thesis. Ostensibly, the book concerned a relatively limited problem: why has America produced almost no systematic, fundamental political theory? Boorstin was not the first, of course, to brood over this question. Most American intellectual historians try pretty hard to deny the charge. Boorstin, however, had no apologies to make. He presented this supposed shortcoming as a triumphant demonstration of our success as a nation. With sour, sidelong glances at Europe, he argued that Americans did not need basic theories. Having no deep antagonisms, they could dispense with metaphysical defenses. Never having repudiated their past, they could discuss their problems as lawyers rather than political philosophers. American values had emerged from happy experience; here the "ought" derived from the "is." In the 20th century, he admitted, Americans could no longer take themselves for granted; but let them not therefore try to acquire an ideology and become crusaders. American political thought need only consult the wisdom imbedded in our historic institutions. In spite of the author's contempt for European theory, a bit of Edmund Burke proved useful in the end.

This celebration of the mindlessness of American life came from no provincial lowbrow. Boorstin is one of the very few native students of American history who possesses European culture, and participates in it with easy familiarity. A Rhodes Scholar, a student at various times of the humanities and the biological sciences, a barrister of the Inner Temple, author of a study in English intellectual history, he knows of what he scorns. Yet the view he advanced in *The Genius of American Politics* cannot be dismissed simply as an intellectual's self-hatred — the perversity of a man somehow driven to revulsion from what he has cherished. The book was more than this. It crisply summarized and foreshadowed the new trend of American historiography: the appeal to homogeneity, continuity, and national character. Above all, it swept aside the characteristically progressive approach to American intellectual history as a dialectic of warring ideologies.

Louis Hartz was already doing the same thing in the articles later reprinted in his *Liberal Tradition in America*, though Hartz's appraisal showed the intellectual deficiencies produced by the homogeneity and

continuity of American society. Having no such qualms about our supposedly one-track culture, Boorstin went a step beyond Hartz. The latter at least conceded to America one system of ideas; Boorstin admitted none at all.

In their different but overlapping ways, the two books sketched the general outlines of an anti-progressive interpretation of American history. While other scholars were rewriting specific episodes in the story, Boorstin and Hartz revised the plot. Boorstin did not leave the matter there, however. He has now come forth with the first volume of a projected trilogy, ambitiously entitled *The Americans*,² which brilliantly elaborates the thesis stated in his previous book. The new volume ranges lightly but learnedly across the Colonial period. Far from being confined to political forms, about which it says relatively little, it has sections on religion, science, the professions, styles of speech, the press, and the art of war. On each of these subjects Boorstin presses the central theme that America flourished by scraping European blueprints, dissolving the social and intellectual distinctions of European life, and moving toward a homogeneous society of undifferentiated men. The whole work amounts to a running demonstration that a naive practicality enabled Americans from a very early date to unite in a stable way of life, undisturbed by divisive principles.

Let it be said at once that this first volume seems to me a collection of sparkling fragments rather than an enduring monument, a fascinating miscellany rather than a grand achievement. Though clearly the most provocative book of the year in American history, it selects waywardly — even willfully — an assortment of topics for the illustration of a thesis which is both too simple and too elusive to embrace the complex experience of a nation. Since Boorstin's book assumes the continuity of American history, it has none itself. Since it revels in the unsystematic character of American culture, it has little plan or system. It is a series of incisive, original improvisations, which never become a symphony. (From the author's point of view the metaphor may be unfair: symphonies are European, he likes jazz.)

Boorstin's ingenuity in turning intellectual limitations into social virtues never flags. Beginning with the Puritans, he promptly deflates the exaggerated claims recently made for their philosophic stature. Having done their creative thinking in Europe, they could concentrate in America on organizing a community. Having a wilderness at their doorstep, they could expel dissenters and so did not need to think out fine-spun theories on toleration. Having the Bible and the English common law to guide them, they could

² *The Americans: The Colonial Experience*, Random House, 434 pp., \$6.00. An excerpt from this volume appeared in *Commentary*, October 1958.

act on precedents instead of losing themselves in utopian abstractions. Whereas other writers have liked the Puritans for their piety or disliked them for their fanaticism, Boorstin loves their sober practicality.

The one American group that is roughly handled in this generally indulgent book is the Quakers. They represent resistance to the American way of life: they refused to bend religious principle to social expediency. Focusing as always on men's attitudes rather than their ideas, Boorstin presents the Quakers as self-righteous dogmatists in their mental habits in spite of the absence of dogma in their formal creed. As missionaries, they panted after martyrdom instead of seeking converts. As rulers of Pennsylvania, they sacrificed some humane legislation and otherwise abdicated responsibility in order to preserve their personal purity. Through these unworldly and un-American proclivities, the Quakers grew insular toward their neighbors and so failed to become "undifferentiated" Americans. To make matters worse, they remained cosmopolitan in spirit and so failed to achieve a "good" kind of insularity, i.e., from Europe. Nothing is said of Quaker leadership in the anti-slavery movement, and almost nothing of their religious toleration, doubtless because these activities were too deep-dyed in principle. Boorstin acclaims toleration in Virginia because it arose there from a practical compromising spirit, not from any theory; he tells us that intolerance in Massachusetts was "useful" in maintaining the unity of the community; but for either tolerance or intolerance as a principle his book has no place.

This is too thoughtful a book to ignore consistently the dangers of the opportunistic and parochial qualities it celebrates. Particularly in the final section, dealing with military institutions, the debits of a short-sighted amateurism are plainly entered. This is also too widely informed a book to rest entirely on the soundness of its general argument. Some of the topics treated here, such as the practice of medicine and of law in the Colonies, have hitherto received the attention of only a few specialists. Although the experts will undoubtedly pick at many of Boorstin's statements, any reader who can control his exasperation at the anti-intellectual bias of the book will find arresting insights into phases of early American life that diverged significantly from English patterns. On the whole, I know of no other book that combines so effectively a grasp of large features of American culture with the intimate, functional detail that makes a social order come to life.

Yet the deeper one goes in this book, the more perplexed one becomes about the criteria it applies in measuring American achievements. The notion that a "pragmatic temper" distinguishes American culture, setting it apart from the bookish and contemplative culture of Europe, is one of our commonest national stereotypes. In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner lyricized "that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that mas-

terful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends." The same image of America was held by most of the progressive historians whose views Boorstin has clearly undertaken to revise. Is his perspective really much different from that of an old-fashioned liberal pragmatist, devoted to a tough-minded respect for experience?

Often the outlook seems very similar indeed. Like Parrington and Beard, Boorstin associates belles-lettres with an aristocratic society, an oppressive class system, and a stagnant regime of privilege. Like John Dewey's philosophy, Boorstin's history celebrates the empirical thinker-doer who is uninhibited by the formal learning of the past — the early American physician, for example, who was fortunately unschooled in the learned ignorance of European medicine. Like any good pragmatist, Boorstin identifies America with innovation, experiment, and a fluid response to the novelties of experience. His democratic rhetoric sometimes exceeds that of the pragmatists themselves: his image of the American as an "undifferentiated man" harks back to Whitman's glorification of the "divine average."

But the substance of this book bears no consistent relation to these rhetorical overtones. If we look at what Boorstin is really writing about, we find very little evidence of experimentation, no innovations except those which circumstances forced the colonists to make, and almost no interest on the author's part in democracy in any positive sense. One of the best sections of the book discusses the extraordinary standardization that the English language underwent in America under the influence of English literary models. To describe this linguistic uniformity as "the vernacular for equality" helps along one part of the argument of the book, but hardly testifies to innovation or experiment. As for the theme of equality, another section of the book lovingly describes the Virginia aristocracy, whose special virtue according to Boorstin lay in maintaining an English aristocratic pattern in a businesslike and unreflective way. Or, to take another example, consider the section entitled "A Conservative Press." It begins by saying that Colonial printers could serve the general public since they did not need to print good books; it ends by showing that the printers actually served the ruling groups who subsidized and controlled them.

Clearly, the pragmatism that informs this bland approval of American institutions resembles only superficially the fighting faith we used to know. For the true pragmatist — for James and Dewey and all their tribe — intellectuals played a creative role in history. Ideas were precious tools for attaining practical ends. Consequently, being "practical" meant continually and deliberately adapting existing institutions to changing problems. For Boorstin, however, thought does not guide behavior; behavior defines thought, or makes it unnecessary. To him, the practical is the traditional, but for Ameri-

cans only. Experiment is our hallowed prejudice, our native American orthodoxy. It is our way of conforming to circumstances, and this way seems to Boorstin all the more agreeable because it does not, like European conservatism, enshrine an otiose set of principles. In this view, the pragmatic virtues lose what little consistency they once had and all connection with a larger universe of values. Instead of furnishing any sense of direction at all, they become fossilized exhibits in our national museum. Activity turns into possession, and our pragmatic habits supply a symbol of acquiescence to any circumstances that can be labeled as distinctively American.

How did this larcenous seizure of pragmatic attitudes for the sake of a conservative historiography come about? The author of *The Americans* did not always write with such affection for the expedient and such scorn for theories. In 1948 he published *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*, a searching examination of the structure and presumptions of Jeffersonian thought. In that book he took abstract principles very seriously indeed. There he explored the philosophical results of the American pragmatic temper — and found them dangerous. The main emphasis fell on Jefferson's undervaluing of the reflective side of human nature: "the desire to get things done predominated over the need to be at peace with God and oneself." This book maintained that Jefferson's distrust of metaphysics mired him in intellectual confusion, and that his materialistic premises led ultimately to the moral obtuseness of modern American thought. Now, through an extraordinary reversal, the vices imputed to Jefferson have become the virtues of America. With incredible virtuosity, Boorstin has furnished a new map of American history with each spin of his own intellectual compass.

To understand this about-face, it may help to note that both books have a deeply conservative character, though in different ways. *The Lost World* rests on a philosophical conservatism. It might almost have been written by a neo-Thomist, for essentially it accuses the liberal tradition, which stretches from Jefferson to Dewey, of lacking humility in the face of God and history. *The Americans*, on the other hand, grows out of an empirical conservatism, which rejects all ideologies in the name of long-established institutions. The earlier book implies that we need a conservative philosophy. The recent one tells us that we have something much better: a conservative way of life.

The shift from one position to the other reflects, I think, a change of fashion in conservative thinking. During the late 1940's and early 1950's a good many intellectuals with historical interests were trying to define a tradition of conservative thought in America. Historians had for so long canonized a succession of liberal heroes that the first reaction to the new postwar mood

was to create a competing pantheon of conservative luminaries. Books by Russell Kirk, Clinton Rossiter,³ and other intellectual historians revealed that a number of American thinkers had respected original sin and had opposed the official cult of progress. Boorstin's *Lost World* fell in with this effort, though it contributed negatively by exposing the alleged failure of the liberal tradition.

Before long, however, the attempt to establish the value of a European type of conservatism in the American environment petered out; we hear very little of it today. The campaign had too obviously polemical a flavor and too unreal a taste: a tempest in an academic teapot. Great faith was required to believe that men like George Fitzhugh, Orestes Brownson, and Irving Babbitt ever had much profundity or any considerable impact. The really massive conservatism of American businessmen, politicians, and even most intellectuals, as we were discovering, spoke in the common language of the Enlightenment. Liberals and conservatives no longer seemed clearly distinguishable. As the ideological gap between them appeared to shrink, and as a mood of acquiescence spread in all quarters, the need to vindicate a conservative intellectual tradition disappeared. When the liberal ideology lost its cutting edge, conservatives ceased to require an ideological shield.

At this point a historiography that was conservative, without passing as such, won out. Instead of upholding the role of the right in America, it merges the left with the right. It argues that America has ordinarily fused a conservative temper with a liberal state of mind. It displays, therefore, the homogeneity and the continuity of American culture. Writing sympathetically about the intellectual conservatism of today, Eric McKittrick has recently pointed out that it stresses the power of institutions; it has no ideological case to make — except, one might add, a case against ideologies. Boorstin, in his last two books, has joined this school, and, in a sense, has taken the lead.

The advantages of this point of view for American historians have not been slight. It has enabled them to cut through the too easy dualisms of progressive historiography. It is inspiring them to do important and original work in understanding American institutions. They should continue to do so. The conservative frame of reference, however, creates a paralyzing incapacity to deal with the elements of spontaneity, effervescence, and violence in American history. Richard Chase, one of the few literary critics who has successfully defied the current mood, has recently called attention to the wildness and extravagance that characterized the outstanding American novels. Similar qualities have shaken our society, from the Great Awakening

³ Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind, from Burke to Santayana* (1953); Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America* (1955).

of the 18th century to the Great Red Scares of the 20th, in spite of its sturdy institutional structure. They deserve more than patronizing attention.

Moreover, contemporary conservatism has a deadening effect on the historian's ability to take a conflict of ideas seriously. Either he disbelieves in the conflict itself (Americans having been pretty much of one mind), or he trivializes it into a set of psychological adjustments to institutional change. In either case, the current fog of complacency, flecked with anxiety, spreads backward over the American past.

It is not likely in the near future that many critical scholars will emphasize the polarities that fascinated the great progressive historians, nor is it desirable that they should. Certainly no one contends today that the debate between Jefferson and Hamilton, or between human rights and property rights, frames our intellectual history. But to stand Parrington and Beard on their heads does not solve the problem. American thought has had other dialectical patterns, which the present cult of consensus hides. Above all, perhaps, that cult neutralizes some moral issues that have played a not entirely petty or ignoble part in the history of the United States. To rediscover their grandeur and urgency, historians do not need the categories of Beard and Parrington, and can probably do without their now debased pragmatic philosophy. But we pay a cruel price in dispensing with their deeper values: an appreciation of the crusading spirit, a responsiveness to indignation, a sense of injustice.